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The Atonement of Learm Dundas.

CHAPTER IX.

LAS COSAS DE ESPAÑA.



T would have been strange if Frank's opinion of Madame de Montfort had been anything but unfavourable. He was too young yet not to wish to air his superior knowledge when he could, and too vain not to like to show himself wiser than the world which in early days had held him in subjection.

He was one of those young infallibles who despise things ancient simply because they are ancient, and who think the human nature that has arisen since they came to their majority a different kind of thing from what it was thirty years

ago. When they go down to the old place to save money and enjoy themselves, they go down as reformers and iconoclasts, finding everything in use there, material and mental, exploded and behind the age, and setting themselves to the task of indoctrinating the stupid natives with new views of life and new adjustments everywhere. According to them everyone is in the dark till they appear. When they do appear they

generally throw the whole place into confusion, and end by evolving modern discords out of antique harmonies.

Given a stranger without vouchers, received by the unsuspecting North Astonians as one of themselves, and it would have been impossible for Frank not to have condemned. She might have been a Saint Dorothea in momentary eclipse, or a Queen Berengaria with her crown hidden for the day; all the same the young barrister would have shaken his curly head like a second Lord Burleigh, and would have pronounced her through his eye-glass as no better than she should be.

When it came to a golden-headed handsome-faced woman of great cleverness and small information, who made bad shots about Columbus, and did not know the difference between the Stuart Mary and the Tudor; a lady who had lived at the Spanish court, where she had been on terms of intimacy with the Queen, yet could not speak Spanish nor yet French; then Frank was perhaps justified in his suspicion that all was not as it appeared, and that the things pertaining to Madame would not bear close examination. But there was no denying that, as time went on and the Marquise baffled him more and more completely, he became unnecessarily bitter and made the most of his case.

Yet, as poor Josephine used to say, half-tearfully, half-petulantly, "What good did it do to speak against Madame as he did? He said over and over again that he could not advise them to cut her. She had been admitted, and now they could not discard her without cause. Why then need he make them all uncomfortable about her, and put things into their heads they would never have thought of but for him? It seemed to her so wrong, one way or the other! She felt that it was treacherous to visit Madame one day and vilify her the next, and she thought it would be far better to say nothing at all, or to act on their words."

By which Josephine proved herself undoubtedly the honestest and most reasonable of the whole Hill household.

But as she was without home influence, being the youngest daughter, and of a credulous affectionate kind of nature which laid her open to ridicule, her remonstrances went for nothing. They might be true, but true or not they were "only what Josephine says," and carried no more weight than what the birds sang on the housetops.

In one thing, however, she gained her point—namely, that they should tell no one in the place how Frank suspected Madame of unknown evil, and counselled vague distrust; and she pleaded for this so earnestly and with so much pathos and sincerity that she induced them all to promise, and the Harrowby word was as good as most people's bonds.

But Adelaide Birkett found it out from Josephine herself. Weak, good-natured plastic Joseph, as her friends called her, had no hard places which the rector's clever daughter could not knead, no closed doors which she could not open. She learnt the whole thing three days after the dinner party, and under the strictest vows of secrecy. Whether she would keep her vows of secrecy depended on those monsters of mystery, unfor-

seen circumstances. If it suited her purpose she would not tell that young Frank Harrowby *knew* Madame de Montfort to be an ignorant adventuress—for that is how she would have put it; if it did not, she would proclaim it. Adelaide was not hampered by the inconvenient impediment of ultra-honour, and thought all things fair in war, if she might have demurred to a few in love.

Never a very responsible kind of person, Pepita seemed to be fast losing the little self-control she had ever had; and the odd fascination which Madame had for her, as for others, might have almost excused the Spaniard's belief that it was witchcraft and unholy. At home to Leam, and when free from the restraining power of her presence, she found no words too hard to say of her, no abuse too strong, no superstitious terror too intense at the power she had over her; but by some subtle magnetism, certainly not voluntarily exerted by Madame, she was drawn almost daily to Lionnet, where she did no good for herself and was a nuisance to all concerned. She got no substantial talk about Spain or the Spaniards, which was what she went for—the illusory bait that was always dangling before her eyes and never caught—and she interrupted the easy flow of Madame's suave enchantment over her landlord and cut short the rector's spiritual exhortations.

Mr. Dundas found his charming occupation of handyman about the place gone without recall when his wife was by, watching him with those jealous eyes of hers which saw all they were not wanted to see and imagined more than they saw. The rector's lessons of good counsel, composed and delivered for the special benefit of his ewe-lamb, fell flat and without application when shared with the woman who held he should be burnt, and with a child who only stared and did not speak. While as for soft-hearted Josephine—who still, in spite of wiser home advice, was oftener at Lionnet than she should have been—she was frightened from her holding by the advent of a woman who every now and then swooped down on her, as on the rest, and told her coarsely that although she was only a white mouse—with a gesture of contempt—that she should not make eyes like that at her husband.

But the Spaniard neither saw nor cared for the small social earthquake she brought in her pocket, save indeed that she had always a savage kind of pleasure in insulting Birkett, as she called him, and annoying Josephine and Dundas; so she went again and again to beseech Madame to talk to her of Spain, of El Corte, the bull-fights and the gracious majesty under whose august shadow she had lived; of Andalusia and her father's house; of the saints and the priests who were priests; to talk to her of the only country where the sun shone and which said its prayers as prayers should be said; the only country where life was life and men and women lived as Christians and not as pigs and heathens.

"Talk to me of Spain!" was Pepita's one standing passionate prayer. "My glorious Spain, where I was so happy, and which I was such a fool to leave!"

To which Madame invariably made answer in her smooth way ; "Willingly, *señora* ;" but by some inexplicable mechanism of conversation as invariably glided off into another topic, leaving her fiery guest with the feeling of a thirsty Tantalus, seeing the fresh waters close to him but unable to drink of them—mocked by promises kept to the ear and broken to the hope.

All this time Mrs. Dundas lived in an ever-increasing fever. The turbulent nostalgia, mingled with hate and jealousy and restless vague desire, that possessed her, broke up the somnolent indolence of her daily habits. Never able to occupy herself, now that the daylight sleep which had kept her quiet for at least eight hours out of the conventional sixteen had gone, she had only people on whom to fall back ; and of these people only Madame la Marquise de Montfort pleased her.

The North Aston community might well say to each other : "Good heavens ! the infliction that woman would have been had she been social and energetic ! "

Poor Madame de Montfort ! Her *corée* at this time was heavy. It took all her strong powers of self-control to retain the sweetness and placidity of demeanour proper to the rôle she had cast for herself in the drama she had inaugurated at North Aston. But she wisely reflected that whoso permits another to disturb him is so far that other's creature and the weaker of the two ; and as she prided herself on her absolute supremacy over weakness, prejudice, mankind, and herself, she would not allow even Pepita's daily presence to ruffle her smooth plumage. She never suffered herself to show the Spaniard how intensely her questions bored her ; still less how they taxed her wits to evade while seeming to meet them frankly and to answer them with candour. For Madame's facts were curious things in their way, and scarcely able to bear close scrutiny. Not the cleverest synchronizer of the century could have made her dates agree ; and not the acutest historic genius, diligent in his search after the ruling law, could have deprived her stories of their phenomenal character. It was well for her that the North Astonians were neither chronologists nor critics ; and that she shot her arrows into space where they hit no man's target when she described the places she had never seen, told of the things that had never happened, and spoke of her dear friends the queens and princesses whom she knew only as a street gazer by sight.

Leam was always with her mother on these visits of infliction. Indeed, Pepita was too jealous to allow the child to be out of her presence by night or day ; and the real reason why Leam was so ignorant was because no governess would or could remain at Andalusia Cottage. What between her suspicious belief that her false-hearted Sebastian lived by saying soft things in dark corners, and her dread lest even the raggedest edges of Leam's affection should envelope a stranger, Pepita's fiery heart had ever been in a tempest during the stay of each successive mistress and rival, and the tempest she had felt she had passed on to others. Mr. Dundas, who cared less for his daughter than for ease

of personal living—that is, as much ease as was possible with such a tumultuous domestic difficulty as his wife—gave up the contest when Leam was about twelve years of age, saying in self-justification when his friends ventured to remonstrate: “She is her mother’s child, not mine, and I can do no more with the one than with the other.”

Though Leam went every day to Lionnet with her mother, no one there knew her the better for her frequency of presence. Sometimes Josephine Harrowby would try to take her in hand, to see what she was like. But even she, good-natured and simple-hearted, and by no means on such mental heights as need have frightened the girl, had to confess that she could make nothing of her. Madame had given up the attempt long ago, and had not cared to renew it. Leam used to sit with her mournful eyes fixed on her mother—that mother’s younger likeness—like a soul in pain oppressed with a very incubus of love and sorrow, watching her with a gaze half-frightened, half-adoring, only longing for her to be silent and let them go away and be together and alone again, but afraid to utter a sound or to make a sign.

In the circle of suffering with which this unhappy Pepita surrounded her world, the child, whom she loved with such intensity, perhaps suffered the most. Life was like a hideous nightmare to Leam at this time, and she came into more inner consciousness than she had ever yet had from the new kind of fear that possessed her not of, so much as for, her mother. How glad she would be when the summer was over, she thought. Her mother would not surely go out so much then, and they would return to the old happy indolent life to which Leam was getting so dangerously accustomed—with nothing to think of, nothing to do, no one to see or to talk to, only dolls to dress and the zambomba to strike. How she hated all these people! Josephine Harrowby was perhaps the least detestable; but she was only a white mouse, as mamma called her, with veins filled with milk and flesh made of curds. But Madame and the rector, how odious they were! and how tiresome and detestable they all were when they would speak to her and she never knew what to answer!

It was all very well to go sometimes to see Madame, and talk to her of *las cosas de España*, she thought; but every day was too much even for Leam’s patriotism of imagination; and she had never mentally accused her mother of bad taste before.

Leam, in the full force of youthful thoroughness, thought her mother’s honesty of speech and unrestrained savagery of candour the grandest qualities in the world. She was mamma, and had a right to say and do as she liked. But why she abandoned her old habits for this new woman—why she went there day after day and sat still and kept quiet, and was amiable and self-restrained, when she hated her in her heart, and said so as soon as she left the house—was a mystery beyond the girl’s power to divine. She looked, wondered, sighed, lamented; but her pathetic eyes pleaded in vain. Not even for Leam could Pepita forgo her desires; and her knowledge of how much her little daughter suffered in this sudden up-

rooting of her life's habits affected her no more than if it was the disquiet of a dream, and Madame la Marquise de Montfort was the sole reality of life.

CHAPTER X.

THE POMEGRANATE BUD.

ONE day Pepita and Leam went to Lionnet as usual. As usual, also, Pepita began to pound Madame in her interrogatory mortar on *las cosas de España*; while Madame gathered up the skirts of her wits to enable her to slip from under the pestle so dexterously that she should not show she had slipped at all; attempting that most difficult feat of intellectual gymnastics—how to satisfy critical curiosity without betraying ignorance.

While the one was thus occupied in questioning, and the other in evading while seeming to reply, Mrs. Corfield and her son Alick came in.

No one, judging by the light of nature and the doctrine of hereditary characteristics, would have said that these were mother and son. Mrs. Corfield's small spare figure, bird-like in its activities and jerky in its movements, had not transmitted a line of itself to her son's lumbering elephantine form, measuring six foot two, military standard; and her sharp face, with its keen black eyes set monkey-like close together, razor-shaped nose, thin lips, and untiring mobility, was as little repeated in his as was the plan of the bony framework. His eyes were large, light-grey, uncertain, wandering; his nose was a blunt unfinished knob cast roughly against his face and not gone over with the modelling tool; and his mouth, uneven and out of drawing, was large and clumsy, with cracked and swollen lips. His manners were shy, his gestures slow and sprawling; but even those who laughed at him most were forced to acknowledge that if the crock was homely the treasure it held was of the finest gold. It was impossible to allow Alick Corfield the smallest artistic merit; but it was also as impossible not to admit that if the most awkward fellow that ever shambled on two ungainly legs, he was one of the best and purest-hearted. He was a modern Beast, as yet wanting the Beauty which should bring him into noble shape.

By the look of things he was not likely to find her at North Aston; for even Carry Fairbairn's catholic philanthropy deserted her when Alick Corfield meandered across her path; and if Carry Fairbairn could not tolerate him, who would? But ever since she had been teased at home about his manifest admiration for her—he had once had a kind of romantic worship for the "wild rose," as he used to call her in his unpublished sonnets, which had made him supremely ridiculous—she had treated him as disdainfully as if he had insulted her. It had had one good effect—that of curing him of his boyish fancy and dispelling the delusive moonshine that had begun to gather in a misleading aureole about her pretty, curly, brainless head.

Kept in such strict seclusion by her mother for the one part, shy,

ignorant, taciturn on her own account for the other, Leam, though a native born and bred, was, as has been said, substantially a stranger to North Aston.

This was the first time for three years that Alick or Mrs. Corfield had met her; for as she never went to church, and until the odd craze of her mother for Madame, as little anywhere else, she was not likely to be known of the local confraternity, and her presence at Lionnet to-day had all the charms that lies round novelty.

"What an odd figure!" thought Sarah Corfield, as she stared at the child sitting there in her mantilla, with her square bow of blue and white ribbon stuck in the thick coils of her dark hair. "What a shame of Sebastian Dundas to let that maniac of his dress up his daughter like a dancing-girl at a fair! I will soon put all that to rights when I get her into my hands, as I will."

"How beautiful!—like an unopened pomegranate bud, a young queen among the flowers, not knowing her own royalty," thought Alick, whose dangerous trick of idealising and delicate poetic fancy, such as by the unjust analogy of appearances no one would have expected from such an unfinished exterior, were powerfully excited by the sight of this dark-eyed, silent, superb young child of Spain.

Mrs. Corfield, intent on her work of reconstruction, made her way straight to Leam.

"Why, Leam! you are quite a stranger, child!" she said with that familiarity of older folks who have seen the young people in long clothes and have consequently no kind of respect for them; to whom, indeed, these young people are always in a manner children whom it would be absurd to treat with respect.

Leam looked at her with the unutterable tragedy of expression bestowed on her by nature.

"Yes," she said briefly.

"One never sees you, child; what do you do with yourself all day?" continued Mrs. Corfield, thinking how she could best work round to her ultimate intention, that of vilifying her head-gear.

"Mamma does not go out," said Leam reluctantly.

Why should this little sharp-faced woman persecute her with her talk?

"But if your mamma cannot go out—though I must say it would be a great deal better for her if she did—why do you not come amongst your young friends? It is not good to be shut up as you are. You should be with the other girls, like one of them. You make yourself quite singular, hiding yourself as you do."

"Mamma does not go out," repeated Leam.

"But you ought, if she does not," reiterated Mrs. Corfield.

Leam looked a set speech in blank verse. By her face you might have said she was oppressed with noble thoughts; keeping back by an effort a flood of eloquent speech. In reality she was saying to herself, "What does this little rat-tooth wish me to say!"

"I am giving a lawn-party the day after to-morrow," continued Mrs. Corfield, needlessly alarmed at the girl's tragic expression and unspoken Alexandrines. "Now come to it like a good child, and don't hide yourself away in this absurd manner! Take off that lace thing, and take out that funny bow; they don't become you, and they look odd in the daytime and make the other girls laugh at you. Put on a nice rational English hat and feather, and come among us like a sensible creature; as I dare say you are when you are found out. But good gracious! you might be some heathen princess of Morocco for what anybody knows of you! And when one does see you, you are so unlike anyone else, one scarcely knows what to make of you. You are not a bit like an English girl in that absurd dress of yours."

"I am not English," said Leam proudly, her face on fire.

"Why, you silly child, how can you be anything else?" laughed Mrs. Corfield. "Your father is English; what should you be but English?"

"Mamma is a Spaniard—an Andalusian," said Leam, fixing her mournful eyes on Mrs. Corfield steadily.

"But don't you know that the nationality of the children follows the father, not the mother?" returned the lady with her argumentative air, settling the matter beyond dispute.

"I am Spanish," repeated Leam, impervious to argument.

"Tut! tut! don't I tell you that the nationality of the children follows the father, not the mother?" reiterated Mrs. Corfield, setting herself to her task of proving and convincing. "You were born in England, brought up in England, your father is an English landed proprietor, as were his fathers before him; how should you not be an English girl? The mere fact of having a Spanish mother alters none of these things. You are English, root and branch, and no talking in the world could make you otherwise."

"Mamma is a Spaniard and I am a Spaniard," again said Leam doggedly, pertinaciously.

"What an obstinate little monkey you are!" cried Mrs. Corfield, half-impudent, half-amused.

"I may be a monkey, but I am a Spaniard all the same," repeated Leam with grave disdain. "And I would rather be a Spanish monkey than an English miss," she added, looking at her mother.

To which Mrs. Corfield snapped out in a tone that meant unconditional repudiation of so hopeless a subject; "I believe you are right, Leam. There is nothing English about you but your name, and that is not a Christian one, like any other girl's—called after a river like a heathen goddess; I wonder how your father could!"

"No, it is not like another's; and I am glad," answered Leam, her proud persistent little face set like a mask.

Mrs. Corfield, who disliked opposition, turned away in a rage. Though a good soul, none better, she had an irritable temper—"tangential," as

the doctor mildly called her when she swept the dust about his ears—and especially was she tangential when opposed by the young.

"What is that crooked stick of an Englishwoman saying to you, my Heart?" cried out Pepita in Spanish.

She knew her daughter's face as well as her daughter knew hers.

"She says I am English, mamma!" said Leam with an air of pathetic pride.

Pepita turned furiously to Mrs. Corfield.

"No, you are wrong!" she cried in a loud voice. "You English are the children of Judas, and we are the daughters of the blessed St. Jago! I should hate my little Leama if I thought she was degraded to the level of the frogs we live amongst as the purgatory for our sins! We are children of Andalusia, beautiful Andalusia, she and I; we have the sun in our blood, you have only fogs and frosts!"

"Do not be angry with us if we wish to claim your daughter," said Madame graciously. "She is too beautiful a prize to be parted with. You too, as the wife of an Englishman, belong to us. If you do not like your captivity, you are none the less a captive, and have to wear the chain of flowers which binds you."

This was said very sweetly, but Madame knew that Pepita hated her captivity, and did not believe her chain to be one of flowers.

"One misfortune need not make two," said Pepita, with more sense of dialectics than she had credit for. "If I was unlucky enough to make myself the wife of an Englishman, I need not have the disgrace of your nationality added to it."

"Still, for very love of you we must claim you," continued Madame, with her fluent smoothness.

"And for want of love of you, I say that neither I nor mine belongs to you!" cried Pepita, snapping her fingers.

"You need not get angry, Mrs. Dundas," put in her husband with an insulting air. "If Madame is gracious enough to say kind things to you, that does not prove anything. We English may not be so anxious to claim you after all."

"And at all events, dear Señora," added Madame de Montfort soothingly, "our admiration of you cannot offend you, and you are a Spaniard all the same. Still, it is good to conform to the customs of the country where you are. The Queen said those very words to me the last time I saw her in Paris. 'Ah! little one,' she said—the dear gracious saint—"though I am a Spaniard to my heart's core, these good Parisians would not know me from one of themselves. It is the wisdom of life.' And what she says we may believe, may we not, Señora?"

"There is sense in that," said Pepita sulkily.

But the charm was wrought, and she was silent and subdued for the next few minutes. The "loyalty" of the low-bred and ignorant worshipper of rank was as strong in her as a religion; and if the Queen had advocated murder, Pepita would have canonized the assassins. Perhaps

that would not have cost her much moral effort on the whole. The struggle would have been if, by some miracle, Isabella had discarded the saints and the Holy Father, and had insisted on adherence to pigs and Protestants.

"You have never been to Spain, Miss Dundas, have you?" asked Alick, shambling up to Leam at whom he had been staring all this time.

She looked at him for an instant, then turned away her eyes with girlish scorn. Though no shadow of the manly life had as yet been thrown across her path, and though she was therefore supremely indifferent to men's homeliness or their beauty, yet Alick Corfield was so uncompromisingly ugly she could not forbear to despise him, and to show that she did. Then she turned her eyes to her mother, so beautiful to look at—the centre of all life and charm to her.

"No," she answered shortly; "not yet."

"Not yet?—then you are going sometime?" he said in a grieved voice.

He thought North Aston would be duller than it had ever been if Leam Dundas left it, now that he had seen her. The little royal unopened pomegranate blossom that she was, she had stirred his fancy like a new poem! And indeed was she not a new poem?—a poem no one had yet read, but into which he might some day—who knows?—have rich and lovely glimpses if only he could break down that shyness, that exclusiveness, and that contempt of her father's race which kept her so far apart, like a stranger in her own home.

"Of course," said Leam superbly. How could he ask such a silly question?

"When?"

She looked at him even more scornfully than before.

"When I am a woman," she said. "Mamma and I will live in Spain then."

"And leave England?"

"Yes; I hate England."

"Oh, I hope you will not always hate it," said Alick, writhing awkwardly on his chair, and blushing painfully.

"I always shall," Leam answered solemnly. "Mamma hates it."

"But you know so little of it," pleaded Alick.

"I know it all; and it is all horrid," said Leam.

"What, North Aston!" he cried.

"Yes; horrid and ugly too," she said stonily.

"Why, it is lovely!" exclaimed Alick with enthusiastic remonstrance.

"You talk nonsense," returned Leam in her grave superiority.

"Mamma says it is ugly, and mamma knows."

"Indeed, Miss Dundas—" began Alick.

"I am la señorita," interrupted Leam with supreme pride. "I am a Spanish señorita, not an English miss."

"I beg your pardon, señorita," continued Alick—Leam looked at

him with an air of tragic satisfaction—"but indeed you cannot know the scenery about North Aston, else you could not call it ugly," he urged again. "There are some of the most splendid views you can imagine about here!—from the top of Steel's Wood, on the moor, by the Water's Meet, from Dunaston—oh! many places. And then the wild flowers! We have the most exquisite flowers here!—rare ones too, not found anywhere else in England."

"Wild flowers?" repeated Leam. "There are no flowers in England!"

Alick smiled uneasily.

"One or two in hothouses perhaps," said Leam with scornful condescension; "but they are not so good as ours."

"I assure you we have wild flowers," said Alick in a boyish eager kind of way. "There are hundreds here—beautiful flowers, quite as lovely as the garden ones. You ought to ramble about the woods and fields, and then you would see them."

Leam shook her head.

"Mamma says there are none, and mamma knows," she repeated as before.

"But indeed—" began Alick again.

"I do not believe you," said Leam.

"Will you believe me if I bring you a basketful to-morrow?" asked Alick.

He had taken it to heart to convince this sceptical little girl-queen that England held objects worthy of her regard.

Leam shook her head again.

"I do not want to believe," she said.

"But you want to know the truth?" urged Alick.

"Oh no, I do not," answered Leam.

"Not want to know the truth!" repeated Alick, aghast; he to whom the most literal exactness was part of the necessity of life.

"No," said Leam stolidly. "What good does it do?"

"But the truth is all we have to live for," cried Alick. "If we have not truth we have nothing."

"I do not know what you mean," said Leam with a sigh of weariness. The strain on her mental faculties by so much talking was getting beyond her, even in its simpler aspect; going into the region of abstract ethics was more than she could bear. "One tells lies when one must, and one must very often," she added.

Alick got very red, and shifted on his chair uneasily. That men should tell falsehoods on occasions, seemed to him one of the most mournful facts of human history—a vice leading to all manner of crimes; itself perhaps the greatest. But that a person should openly confess, not only to the need but the practice of falsehood, and that person his girl-queen—his unread poem—gave him a moral shock he could not for a moment overcome. He was glad his mother had not heard her. He himself

graduated in his first lesson of concealment, his first step too of independent life, in this content that his mother had not heard Leam Dundas confess she did not care for truth, and told lies when it suited her.

"What are you saying to my daughter?" asked Pepita jealously. "I do not like young men to talk to my daughter apart. We Andalusian mothers are not like your English women, who let their daughters run to the right and the left with no one to look after them. We take care of ours, and ask the Holy Mother to help us."

Poor Alick blushed again, painfully as before. To his honest heart there was no more harm in talking to Leam, or in idealising her as this pomegranate bud, than there was in looking at the sunlight on the lawn.

"I was saying nothing," he stammered in inexplicable confusion.

"Then you must be very stupid to sit and talk and say nothing," said pitiless Pepita. "A Spaniard would not be so absurd!" contemptuously.

"He said there were flowers here, mamma—wild in the woods," said Leam, turning her grave face to her mother and speaking in the tone of one morally injured.

"Flowers!" cried Pepita with unutterable disdain. "We call those things weeds in Spain!"

"There!" said Leam triumphantly; "I told you so."

"You should see our flowers in Spain," then cried Pepita, following up the strain, but not ill-temperedly. "Those are flowers; not like these miserable little drops of white and yellow you call daisies and buttercups, but pomegranates, and myrtles, and orange flowers, and oleanders—ah! those are flowers—with roses you can bury your face in, and jessamine as big as stars. And the fruit! You call your sour green stones fruit?—a Spaniard would give them to his enemy's pigs when he wanted to poison them."

"I know how beautiful things must be in Spain, and I should like to go there and see them all," answered Alick. "But if we have not got things so good in England, it is only wise to make the best of what we have, is it not? We cannot all be Spaniards," he added, as if he would have been one if he could. Perhaps he would, to be Leam's compatriot.

"No," said Pepita, as if this was a profound reflection to which she assented on mature consideration. "Heaven is not for all, and cows cannot be lions."

"Nor wild roses pomegranates," returned Alick, mentally contrasting Carry Fairbairn with Leam Dundas.

Pepita stared at him. Something in his homely face seemed to waken a kindly chord in her rough-hewn heart.

"You are ugly," she said frankly, "but you look good. You may come and see me if you don't stay too long or come too often."

Mrs. Corfield heard this conditional invitation. She had already forgiven Leam, and she was pleased to see these two odd creatures take kindly to her treasure. Though she was as anxious about Alick's minor morals as if he had been a village maiden canvassing for the *rosière*, and

looked sharply after the young ladies of the place, thinking no one good enough for her boy and that all were trying to get him, she could not see much danger here. A fat if still beautiful matron, and a lean brown child with big eyes and a wooden manner, had no elements of peril to alarm her; so she welcomed the invitation, which, little flattering as it was, was an unique record in Pepita's unwritten diary, as not only promising a little change for her beloved but also as opening the way for her own future setting to rights of what was now to her mind all to wrongs.

As her share in the transaction, she repeated her request for Leam to come to her garden party the day after to-morrow; and she wisely ignored the matter of the mantilla.

"Would you like it, my Heart?" asked Pepita.

Leam fastened her serious eyes on her mother's face. By the look of her it would seem as if she had been asked to fix the date of her execution.

"Not without you, mamma," she said.

"Oh yes, Miss Dundas—señorita," correcting himself—"do come, please," cried Alick; "I will show you so many things to interest you if you will—eggs and feathers and mosses and ferns; do come."

"My little Leama, say, would you like it?" her mother asked again with unwonted softness.

Leam looked at Alick. The prayer of his heart, stamped like a printed word on his honest clumsy face, touched her with the first sensation of womanly power. It was a new expression that shot like living light from her splendid eyes—a new turn in the pose of her small proud head, and in the action of her hand, flirting her fan as only a Spaniard can—as she answered, still looking superbly at Alick but speaking to her mother; "Yes, mamma, let us go. But you too," she added anxiously, touching her gown with a clinging gesture.

The new look of womanly power faded away as rapidly as it had come, and she was once more only the shy, half-frightened little girl, holding to her mother's hand with a tenacity of love almost beyond nature.

"We will come," said Pepita royally; and even Sarah Corfield, for all her martinet temper and mistress air, had to receive her acceptance as condescension.

"Now, Mrs. Dundas, shall I take you home?" said her husband in a peevish tone.

His pleasant afternoon had been destroyed, and he was angry with all the world; but chief of all with Pepita—with whom should a man be angry if not with his wife?—and as his day was broken pitilessly he might as well leave the fragments without more delay.

It had promised so well in the beginning, and had ended so ill! He had been told off to arrange a cabinet of geological specimens for Madame. They were all in confusion now as to stratification and era, but each was carefully labelled, and she had written out the list—from

memory she told him—as to the order in which they ought to be arranged. They were specimens she had collected with her husband, she said, and each fragment represented some sweet day and hour of the dear past.

It was odd that she had at the moment in her pocket the bill of a local geologist for a beginner's cabinet—not paid.

"English dog, I will not be taken by you at all; nor will I go till I like!" answered Pepita in Spanish.

"Ah, señora!" said suave Madame de Montfort, "I hear by your voice that you are assenting to your husband's request in your pretty Spanish way—that grand old Castilian tongue! I am so sorry you must go!"

"But I am not going," said Pepita by no means suavely.

"No? Then I am glad," answered Madame in just the same tone of voice and with the same placid smile. "Let me put you into this easy chair, with these cushions and footstool, and make you comfortable. Unfortunately, I am obliged to go to dear Mrs. Birkett's; but that is no reason why you and la señorita should not stay here as long as you like."

"You talk like a foolish woman," said Pepita roughly. "Do you think there is any pleasure to me in staring at your ugly sea-sick paper? If you are not here to talk to me of Spain, why should I care to stay? Come, little one, let us go. Brigand"—to her husband, always in Spanish—"am I to wait here all the day for you? Will you never leave off showing those wolf's teeth of yours in your idiotic laughs? You take care never to laugh at home!"

"Do men laugh who live in hell?" returned Mr. Dundas bitterly.

"If you were a good son you would appreciate better the home of your father and of all your generation," retorted Pepita with a scornful laugh. "Come, my angel!" to Leam. "If it were not for thee, heart of my heart, my life would be one long eternal night."

"And mine without you, mamma," said Leam in a responsive voice, sweeping past her father scornfully.

"How I wish I could understand all those pretty things you say!" sighed Madame.

"You must be a very foolish woman to have forgotten," replied Pepita. "To think of your having lived with our Queen—at El Corte—and that you have now forgotten our tongue—you are stupid!"

"I know I am," replied Madame sweetly; "but," making a bold shot, "your Spanish does not seem to me quite like the court language I was accustomed to hear. Perhaps it is purer."

"Perhaps it is," said Pepita. Then rolling out half-a-dozen opprobrious epithets in *patois*, she looked up into Madame's face and asked; "Do you understand that?" mockingly.

"No," said Madame. "Have I lost much?"

"Your face in a looking-glass," replied Pepita with an insolent gesture as she passed through the doorway.

CHAPTER XI.

AMONG PITFALLS.

It was a fine day for the garden party at Steel's Corner, and all North Aston was there. This "all" meant no such multitudinous gathering at its fullest, not even when, as now, "company" was staying both with the Fairbairns and the Corfields themselves, and Frank Harrowby, the local eupatriot of the second degree, was at the Hill.

But people who are accustomed to small measures are satisfied with modest magnitudes; and Mrs. Corfield was assumed to have achieved a success in that she had a learned Professor who cared for nothing on earth but Greek and German; his wife who lived only to perfect her *hortus siccus*; and his daughter, who was pretty though advanced, eloquent on the rights of women and the iniquities of men, and who discussed without blushing the details of doubtful subjects which her grandmother at sixty scarcely understood and never mentioned above her breath. In addition to these were three young Oxonians from the Limes, to brighten up the girls and make the young men of the place uneasy; and to crown all there came in due course Pepita, Leam, and Madame la Marquise de Montfort.

Mrs. Dundas, with her splendid beauty and foreign dress, made a telling point that interested strangers, if North Astonians themselves could have spared her without lamentation. They knew her; and knowledge had conquered interest and created in its place disgust. But Leam was an acquisition, in that she too wore the high comb, mantilla and bright coloured square bows in her hair which were Pepita's social virtues; carried a large black fan which she furled, unfurled, raised, lowered, and used as only a Spaniard can; had superb eyes and a tragic face; was proud, taciturn, and young; and thus brought with her the sentiment of novelty and something that had to be found out.

As for Madame, she was always an acquisition. Between her gracious sweetness and never ceasing anecdotes she kept her world amused; and the croquet players wanted specially to see her at the hoops. For which cause she was held the greatest acquisition of all.

She had told the Harrowbys that before her marriage she had been one of the lady champion-players. "Of England?" asked Miss Harrowby simply, thinking that now she had driven in a peg whereon they could hang more than a mere theory—whereon they could find an undeniable demonstration. For as all the archives of croquet were carefully stowed away in the library at the Hill, they could verify her statement by making her point out the match in which she had played, and the name she had then borne.

But when Maria had said, "Of England?" Madame had smiled and

answered softly, "No! I was not in England then;" and the peg had broken, and the demonstration collapsed as all the rest had done.

Nevertheless the elder two Miss Harrowbys so far believed in her that they expected her to help them with her advice to-day. They quite relied on her to coach them into better form, according to Cyril Fairbairn's vernacular, than that which they had been able to acquire from the doubtful teaching of manuals and the contradictory counsels of stray visitors, even though helped by as much devotion and hard work as would have enabled them to take honours in one of the exact sciences. If she could teach them better things than they already knew in croquet, Maria and Fanny Harrowby felt they would forgive her all they did not understand, and take her on trust for the remainder.

When they came up to her, however, shouldering their mallets and trying the run of the balls like people thoroughly in earnest, Madame—looking supremely lovely in her black weeds in contrast to their light summer dresses—besought them so earnestly not to ask her to take part in the game, not even to the extent of looking on or giving advice, they had nothing for it but to give her up to the rector and do the best they could with their own unassisted lights.

"I am sorry so you paid me the compliment of wishing for my opinion," she said sweetly; "but indeed I could not! It is too full of treasured memories, and it would open all my wounds afresh."

What could be done? It was a severe disappointment; but we all have to bear with disappointment, and is not grace best proved by trial? Croquet was a kind of secular religion to the Harrowby girls, and had its orthodox developments and its heretical. It had been a vital point with them to know on which side Madame de Montfort, lady champion of—where?—ranged herself, and what laws ruled her in the matters of taking off and the like.

But again, as has been said, what could they do? Time would soften her present grief, as it would substitute silk for crape and rose colour for black; and then perhaps she would take up her mallet and develop her principles. Meanwhile they must content themselves with their own principles; and in spite of Adelaide's cold eyes and scornful smile, and Frank's rather cruel "chaff," allow Madame to escape her ordeal and beat a retreat beneath the lime trees with the faithful rector as her bodyguard.

Mr. Dundas was in the set, and for the first time in his life blasphemed Cashiobury.

"She knows no more of croquet than she does of Spain," whispered Adelaide to Frank, and Frank nodded back as his answer; "but she is too clever to be caught. My opinion is that she is the cleverest woman out."

"And the worst," replied Adelaide viciously.

"Hardly," said Frank. "I have known a few that I think could give her long odds in wickedness and beat her."

"Impossible!" cried the rector's daughter, just as Madame, by the

rector's side, turned into the lime-tree walk, and considered what it would be the best to say.

"I am afraid I disappointed those dear Harrowby girls, but I really could not help it. With the best will in the world I could not nerve myself," she began tremulously. "Perhaps indeed I ought not to have come to such a festive scene?" she added, looking up into her clerical companion's handsome face with a touching air of self-reproach—a penitent dutifully waiting on spiritual condemnation or absolution as might be accorded.

"Oh! those silly girls can wait!" said the rector hastily. "And as for your coming here, what impropriety can there be in joining a friendly little meeting like this? If we were a large community numbering many strangers among us it would be different; but we are almost like one family."

"A family ruled over by a very efficient and delightful head; a head that makes one understand pastoral times," said Madame prettily, as if the new thought of the rector's pleasant chieftainship had diverted her mind from grief to gratitude.

The military looking pastor smiled down on her with an air of fatherly affection and official satisfaction commingled. He overlooked the little slip between pastoral and patriarchal, and accepted the spirit of her praise as it was intended. In years gone by he might have preferred to have been told that he had missed his vocation and spoilt a good general to make an unappreciated parson; that he was a pearl of price degraded from its fit setting in a conqueror's crown to be cast before a handful of clod-born swine who knew nothing of its value, and would have been better contented with husks and draf. Now he recognised that the clerical profession had its advantages; and that to be the appointed shepherd of such a ewe lamb as Madame la Marquise de Montfort was a function not to be despised in a man's estimate of treasures. Still he would not allow himself to be puffed up even by her delicious praise.

"Perhaps my headship is not always appreciated," he answered with a melancholy air. "Families are self-willed at times, and mine is no exception to the rule."

"It would be only through the greatest ignorance if your rule was not approved of, dear Mr. Birkett," she returned. "Where would the poor be—where indeed should we all be!" she cried in a fine acknowledgment of equality with sinners.

"As for the poor, I do my best for them, I admit; but it is uphill work, dear Madame—has been all my life," he answered with a sigh.

Had he consecrated himself to the task of winning souls like some old monk vowed to renunciation of the soft things of life from youth upwards, instead of taking all the pleasures of the flesh as he took his 'twenty-seven port, with decorous generosity like a gentleman, he could not have sighed with a deeper expression of unrewarded effort. No one would have thought how easily he had taken his hill; how comfortably he had slept in the

arbours by the way, and how little strain that pack of dull bucolic souls, which it was his business to drag up to celestial heights at the cost of three pounds a-piece, had been on his clerical shoulders. Perhaps he did not know it himself. The fancy plays strange tricks with the intellect, and more men are self-deceivers than conscious hypocrites; save indeed when they have to conceal their family skeletons; and then terror conquers truth, and the hypocrisy which locks the door is held superior to the candour which would open it.

"That is what my dear father used to say," replied Madame sympathetically. "He was almost broken hearted at the ingratitude of his people—he who tried so much to do them good."

"I should think an American clergyman's life must be a trying one," returned the rector, to whom, as to most men of his stamp and calibre, America is the unclean thing whence nothing good can come.

"Very," said Madame.

"Where was your father's church?" he enquired.

"New York," replied Madame, plunging boldly into the safety of the vast.

"Tell me now—the organisation of the Episcopal Church, is it the same in America as it is here?" the rector asked, sitting down on a garden seat beneath the limes, glad of the opportunity of learning a little about a subject of which he was entirely ignorant.

Being of the military order of mind, this handsome shepherd of souls, with his contempt for knowledge beyond and below his own in about equal proportions, was undeniably ignorant, and that on more subjects than the organisation of the Episcopal Church in America.

"Precisely the same," answered Madame.

"But paid by pew-rents, I suppose?"

"No," said Madame, remembering how her real, not phantasmal, father—the veterinary surgeon, not the New York divine—had growled over his allotted portion in the commutation which had set the whole parish by the ears; also of the family pews, like cattle-pens, that had gone free with the houses. Knowing no other system, she could devise no other answer; but she was becoming unpleasantly conscious of pitfalls and ploughshares about.

The rector however said nothing.

"Where is the charge laid, then?" he asked. "They have no tithes, have they? How is it managed?"

"I can scarcely tell you all these minute particulars," said Madame; "I was so very young when we left America."

"Did your father die, that you left so young?" continued Mr. Birkett, in nowise aware that by his friendly questionings he was inflicting mild torture on his favourite companion.

"Yes!" sighed Madame; "and," with a piteous look in her crumpled eyebrows and appealing eyes, "so painfully, that I do not care to think of it: indeed, I cannot."

"We will talk no more of it, then," said the rector kindly; "we will speak of something pleasant. Tell me of your travels. What a strangely geographical life you have led! I envy you!"

It was the best thing of which he could think by way of diversion.

"Yes, I have been about a good deal," replied Madame, taking his meaning at a venture, looking up the garden to the croquet-ground with a desire she dared not show, that some one would come down to her and release her from the clutches of her unconscious Torquemada.

"France, Spain, England, America—you are a traveller!—a cosmopolite such as one does not often see! And to think of your settling down in such a tranquil little nest as North Aston!"

"It is odd, is it not?" she said. "That was through you and dear Mrs. Birkett," with a look of filial gratitude. Then, with a pretty playful raising of her small black-gloved hand, she added: "If any harm comes of it, I will lay it all on your heads."

"And I will take that very remote chance for the sake of the pleasure we have already had, and I hope shall have for many years," returned the rector gallantly. "Some day I will get you to tell me the whole roll-call of your adventures in their fitting sequence."

"Yes; some day I will," said Madame looking at him steadily.

"But one thing has always puzzled me," said the rector, crossing his legs and taking an attitude of reflection. "How is it that you, who are the daughter of a Protestant American clergyman, knew the Queen of Spain so well, and married a French nobleman?"

"That is soon told," answered Madame with a soft, superior smile. "Mamma was a Roman Catholic, and Spanish by her mother's side. She was a great deal at court, and knew Madame de Montijo, the poor dear Empress's mamma. Monsieur le Marquis was a friend of the Empress's, and brought letters to her most gracious Majesty and my mamma; and it ended—as you see," lifting both her hands. "All these wonders are nothings when we come close to them," she added.

"Ah! that was how you came to visit Spain!" cried the rector, with the look of a man who has struck the lost trail.

"Yes, when papa died we left America, we went to Aranjuez by the queen's invitation, and lived there with mamma's old household—her old servants. And oh! by the bye, Mr. Birkett, that reminds me," then cried Madame with a kind of start, breaking away suddenly into a new country, "Wigley is talking of leaving me! That is the difficulty of a small place like this, is it not, when one has found the right kind of person then for them to go? Can you recommend me a nice steady man? I am glad I remembered to ask you. Speaking of dear mamma's old servants put it into my head. You must excuse my abruptness."

"I am sorry Wigley is leaving you," said the rector, after a pause. He was disturbed at this sudden shifting of the scene; for he was really interested in Madame de Montfort and desirous of knowing her true history. Not that he suspected he had heard what was not true, but he

wanted fuller details and exacter dates; from friendship rather than curiosity.

"Should I do well to speak to him and ask him to stay?" said Madame. "I would not do it without consulting you, my father confessor," pleasantly.

"Shall I speak to him for you?" asked the rector, with a magnanimous overcoming of his annoyance. Who would not, with such a sweet face, full of the subtle flattery of respect, that most penetrating and seductive of all modes of adulation, looking so tenderly into his?

"Thank you; how kind you are! Yes, do please. But perhaps," she added after a moment's reflection, "I had better speak to him myself; for"—smiling—"I heard of his intention to leave only in a kind of confidence from my nurse, and Wigley must not know that I know it. I had forgotten that when I spoke to you; so perhaps I had better sound him myself, and see how I can get it from him voluntary. We never know how these people will meet us. They hang together so closely, and seem to look on all of us as their enemies."

"Too true," said the rector, who had not stared at the grammatical slip. "And in that case you will do it best. Neither Wigley nor any man, to be called a man, can deny what you choose to demand," he added gallantly. "Service at Madame de Montfort's is an honour in itself to be well counted in the wages!"

"You will make me vain," said Madame, looking down.

"Then I should mark you with your first fault," answered Mr. Birkett.

An honest gentleman if but a wooden-headed one, a good husband and moderately upright in all his dealings, this fair-faced daughter of an hypothetical father, this sorrowing widow of Simon de Montfort's descendant, had cast a glamour about him wherein he neither saw nor heard things as they were. He would have taken any doubt of Madame's absolute veracity as a personal insult, and of all her new-found friends he was perhaps the most staunch; if others, and notably Sebastian Dundas, run him hard.

Looking up the garden to the croquet ground, Frank Harrowby's jaunty dapper figure came prominently before them.

"Do you know much of young Mr. Harrowby?" asked Madame suddenly.

"Frank? Oh yes! I have known him all his life pretty well. Why do you ask?" was the rector's reply.

"Do you like him?" she asked again.

"Like Frank Harrowby? Yes, well enough. He is a good boy on the whole; was a very nice boy before he went to London; but between ourselves he has grown conceited enough for a dozen of late years. Still, he is a good fellow in the main."

"I don't like him," Madame said shortly.

"No? Why not?"

"He is abominably untruthful and leads a frightfully immoral life in London. Don't ask me more, nor how I know this; but I do know it."

Madame said this with a little more energy than she generally used in speaking. Had it been any other than herself Mr. Birkett might have even said her energy was spiteful.

"I am very very sorry to hear all this!" said the rector in a severe tone. "So bad as that?"

"I would not believe him on his oath," repeated Madame.

"Dear! dear! How grievous! He did not tell us that he knew you," said Mr. Birkett, meaning to imply that this reticence on the part of Frank had an ugly look with it, and so far confirmed Madame's accusation.

"No, he does not know me," she answered. "It is only me who happens to know him. He was implicated in a matter in which, unfortunately, I was so far connected as to be the receiver of the poor girl's confidence. He is a wretch!"—indignantly—"not fit to be spoken to by gentlemen and ladies! Oh these men!" she continued with strange bitterness. "I know something of them! So meek and virtuous and mealy-mouthed at home, and the lives they lead in London and Madrid! But don't betray me about Mr. Francis Harrowby," she said anxiously.

"Surely not! but I am sorry to hear so bad an account of the young scoundrel," answered the rector with the virtuous indignation common to sinners in the sere and yellow leaf when judging the follies of youth.

"He is very bad, there is no doubt of that," returned Madame; "but I may depend on your discretion?"

"My word has been passed," said the rector a trifle stiffly. "Will you give me more particulars? for you can depend on me."

"No, dear Mr. Birkett. I will not do that," Madame responded gently. "My word too has been passed to hold these confidences sacred; and not even to you, dear friend and pastor, could I commit the dishonour of betraying confidence."

"You are right, but I think I ought to know," said the rector. "Remember, I have a daughter, Madame!"

"So you have; but your curiosity must not be satisfied at the expense of my promise, and your faith in me must carry you over the stile," said Madame playfully. "And now I must go and speak to that dreadful Mrs. Dundas. I see no one talking to her and she likes attention."

On which she rose and carried off the rector to where Pepita was standing in the full glare of the sun, watching her husband with a threatening face, while shading her eyes with her fan; Leam, clinging to her arm, also shading her eyes with her fan.

Madame had accomplished her intention; shot her bolt first before Frank had fired his; cut the ground from under his feet and thrown up her defence works, which also were her batteries; and now she had to escape from Mr. Birkett, whose cross-questionings were becoming tiresome. Not that she intended to exchange his probe for Pepita's pestle. She knew better than this how to arrange her difficulties, else she would not

have been where she was to-day, the accepted equal of the moral and exclusive North Astonians.

When Pepita saw her coming, she moved her voluminous person in her turn to another uncomfortable-looking garden seat not under the shade of trees.

"Come and sit by me," she said, with a jerk of her closed fan.
"You and I are not English; we can talk."

"Willingly," answered Madame with her usual bland smile and complying sweetness of manner; but by one of those incomparable conversational glissades of hers, she slipped the rector from her own hands on to the Spaniard's; and in an instant was in the thick of a discussion between Mrs. Birkett and Mrs. Fairbairn on the management of children and the diseases of infants, before either knew that she had turned.

But even here things did not go smoothly; for Mrs. Fairbairn advocated hardening, and Mrs. Birkett was all for care; and when the one called the system of the other neglect, that other sent back the retort word, coddling. So Madame, to whom both appealed, was hard put to it not to take part with either while seeming to agree with both; and to make each feel that she sided really with her, but out of respect for the greater experience of that other forbore more open demonstration, taxed even her powers of suggestion, considerable as they were. She succeeded however; this being the kind of thing in which she was specially great. It was the secret of her success. And when she had turned the conversation, which threatened to become a little warmer than was necessary, into the best method of growing peaches in pots, to give Mrs. Fairbairn an occasion for law-giving—and how she should most successfully mount a hand-worked screen, as one of the questions on which Mrs. Birkett was entitled to be heard—she had not only put both these ladies in good humour again, but had impressed each with the belief that she held her views of life from beginning to end, though policy and respect together forbade her to testify openly.

CHAPTER XII.

STRUCK DOWN.

PRESENTLY the croquet party broke up; the game was at an end, and the players melted into the talkers. By the power of attraction, consciously or unconsciously excited by Madame de Montfort, the gentlemen gravitated to her as of course, and that man was the happiest who was enabled to pay her the most flattering attention. Yet the girls there were pretty enough to have found admirers on their own merits. Carry Fairbairn, with her curly head and frank blue eyes, round, a trifle rustic, but wholesome and unspoilt; her sister Susy, darker and more piquante—the one the wild rose, the other the damask; Adelaide Birkett, with her delicate fea-

tures and soft fair hair, perhaps too cold and statuesque for some tastes, but of a high-bred type and undeniably graceful if not always gracious; Leam Dundas, like a Tragic Muse with her sad proud mouth and creamy skin, her face full of unfathomed depths, her magnificent eyes eloquent of unawakened power, a creature to bewilder men with visions of the riper future when she should have come to the full splendour of her possibilities; and even Josephine Harrowby, though thirty and freckled, pretty too with her English sweetness of face, soft and affectionate, her changing colour and tender eyes telling of the wifely love and womanly submission she would give had she but the chance; yes, they were fair and sweet enough, but Madame la Marquise de Montfort, the widow of unknown antecedents, distanced them all, and no other woman, young or mature, married or single, lovely or learned, had a chance when she was by. And it would have been the same in a more varied society than that which had gathered on the lawn at Steel's Corner to-day.

She was the type of woman in whom most men take supreme delight. Comely by nature and skilfully improved by art, her beauty was not of that turbulent kind which distracts as much as it charms, but restful, pleasant, soothing, neither stirring the senses nor disordering the imagination—sweet, gracious, womanly, and nothing more. She had a low smooth level voice, a quiet but uniformly cordial manner, and a flood of pleasant talk that amused without taxing her hearers' powers of mind to follow or surpass. Indeed she did not tax their energies in any way; made no demands on them, and had no high standard, personal, intellectual or moral, which excited or strained them. She was always even-tempered, peaceable, sympathetic; was never in hysterics, and knew as little of heroics. Her views of life were bounded by the optimist doctrine of whatever is right, by which she was saved a world of useless trouble and spiritual contention; her theology was the theology which accepts and does not question, though it should include the doctrine of two and two making five, and the part being greater than the whole; her philosophy began and ended in the one axiom that extremes meet and are dangerous; and her sociology did not range beyond the two fundamental principles—there must be poor people and rich people, and the sole rights to which women ought to lay claim are the rights to be worshipped and worked for.

But by women she meant ladies, or their imitators. Cottagers and servants—all these wretched creatures must work for themselves, of course. They came into the division of class, and were not included in the plan.

In short she was a delightful companion for the superior creature in his moments of relaxation; just high enough to interest and not so high as to fatigue; and in these two words laid the secret of her charm.

Presently the close-set group began to disintegrate. A new game was made up—Mr. Dundas and Alick Corfield both declining; and soon Madame and Mr. Dundas found themselves as if by chance alone under the lime trees where Madame had been with the rector half an hour ago—their faces turned to the wilderness by the river side.

A steep path, made difficult by a network of tree-roots and projecting rocks, led to an arbour facing the river and the valley. It was a beautiful point of view, and a favourite show place for the few visitors who might drop down the stream to the old castle on the heights beyond. Madame had not seen it yet, and Mr. Dundas had more reasons than one for wishing to show her the view, and sit for a while in the safe seclusion of the arbour. So he carried her on, she apparently so engrossed in the conversation that she did not see they had left the lime-tree walk and were drifting into the wood.

They were talking of the influence of women over men, and the means the former ought to adopt to secure the good humour and satisfaction of the latter. They forgot to reverse the medal and to say anything about the means which men ought to adopt to secure the happiness of women. That was a view of the subject which Madame was too politic, Sebastian Dundas too ill-mated, to take.

If Madame did not know where she was drifting, Pepita did. Sitting there on the lawn, her large eyes blinking sleepily in the sunlight, but seeing everything and suspecting more than she saw, she watched her husband and Madame pass from the terrace to the wood, from publicity and so far security, to secrecy and no one could say what beside. She knew the walk they were on. In years gone by she had allowed herself to be taken there as a visitor who would be interested in the view; but she had never gone again. Her remembrance of the tree-roots was as if the ground had been covered with petrified serpents; of the rocks as if they had been hiding places for banditti. To this hour she shuddered at the unwholesome wildness which had terrified her so desperately at the time, and imagination had heightened its horrors. She remembered the little arbour, and the pleasant refuge it was, as her husband, then her lover, had whispered to her, for those seeking "solitude for two."

She had turned her shoulder to him coldly when he had said this, imagining herself there with big brown José, in his gala dress, home from some journey where he had been seeing the wonders of the great world, and whence he had brought her a simple little trinket that she prized more than all the costly presents her husband had given her, since she found he had deceived her. And then she remembered her quick flash of recurrent disdain. This cold and sunless hole, a love-place for a Spaniard? Her bitter laugh as she contrasted the fiery heat of her own skies with this tepid air and pale grey heaven—big brown José, strong and lusty, with this white-faced travesty of Saint Sebastian—had startled both her husband and the Corfields; and she would not tell them why she had laughed, nor what her thoughts had been.

But the arbour that she disdained even in imagination for a Spaniard's love-place would be good enough for these false English reptiles. She must follow them, and hear what they said. The network of petrified serpents, the opposing rocks, she must encounter them all. And she must take Leam with her. This daughter, who was to be her second self,

and, some day perhaps her avenger, must know all that she knew, and be able to hate from knowledge not only sympathy.

Suddenly it was borne in on her that she had been tricked ; that it had been the passionate vitality of her own desires which had given life to Madame's colourless revelations ; that she had been told nothing about Spain because the pretended friend of the Queen had nothing to tell, and that the whole thing—La Corte, Aranjuez, Andalusia—all was a cheat if not wholly a sham. What Mrs. Harrowby vaguely felt through her intelligence Pepita divined by instinct. Had she been required she could not have given a reason for the new faith that was in her ; but she was sure all the same.

There was no more sleepy blinking in the sunlight now for her ; no more quiet sitting while Mrs. Corfield and Alick tried to draw Leam away from her side, on the plea of showing her the butterflies which the latter had collected, but with the secret intention on the part of the former to lecture her on her dress and to advise her on her manners. Rising abruptly, she drew Leam's hand within her arm and looked furiously at Alick and his mother.

"Your voices distract me ! " she cried roughly. " You are foolish people, hissing there like geese ! Do you think I would trust my daughter out of my sight with a bad young man and his intriguing mother ? Go ! you fatigue yourselves for nothing, and you fatigue me ! Come, my Heart, let us get rid of these creatures and be alone with each other."

And on this the two moved away together, leaving Alick and his mother disconcerted and amazed.

"The only charitable thing to say of her is that she is mad," said Mrs. Corfield briskly, as she looked after the young lithe figure gliding over the grass by the side of the large fat woman, whom yet her exceeding stoutness had not robbed of her native undulating Andalusian grace, and wondered if Leam, so lean and slender now, would ever be as stout as her mother ; while Alick, looking after her too, wondered only if ever in the future he should come to be to Leam Dundas as a brother and a friend.

"Leama," said her mother, as they passed into the shadow of the lime trees, and were out of hearing of the rest, "I want you to come with me on the traces of that false fiend, that accursed woman who has just gone by with your father. I will listen to what they say, and find out more than they think for. The saints have put it into my head, and I will tie a rope round her lying throat."

"Yes, mamma," said Leam trembling.

How wild her mother looked ! Flushed, quivering, her eyes bloodshot, her nostrils red and distended, her whole face breathing fire, her manner fierce, she terrified the child who yet was used to her outbreaks. And then this dark dank shrubbery walk, where the sun never penetrated and which seemed as if it led to the Valley of the Shadow where sinful souls congregate and are tormented—how terrible it all was ! How she wished

that time would flow but the days not change, and that she could go back to the undisturbed life of what seemed like so many years ago, when her mother slept after her fat gazpacho, and she played with her dolls in silence at her feet, and knew no desire beyond. And now, all was at an end ; with the foreshadowing of still greater changes sweeping on.

But she obeyed, as was her wont ; and the two walked stealthily along the path until they came to the back of the arbour where Madame de Montfort and Sebastian Dundas were sitting, talking in low voices together.

Thrusting Leam a little apart and laying her finger on her lips in token of silence, Pepita stole to the arbour, bending her ear against a crevice just as Mr. Dundas was saying in a tender voice : " May I ? " and Madame answered gently ; " Yes."

The listening woman clenched her hands and set her small square teeth like a trap. Was it then as she suspected ? Had these reptiles gone so far on the bad way as this ? Had that painted cheat dared to pick up the love she had discarded ? and had her husband reckoned so far without his host as to imagine she would tamely submit to his finding in another woman the sympathy and affection he could not find in her ? Pepita held her breath, but registered her vow all the same ; and her square teeth set themselves more firmly, while her nails dug sharply into her palms.

Then said Mr. Dundas in a soft, almost cooing voice :

" It is the greatest proof of friendship we can give each other, dearest Madame—you to graciously allow me to remonstrate, I to venture to find fault ; but I have long had it at heart to say it to you. You so good, so pure, so superior, how is it that you can speak of the Spanish Queen as you do ? It pains me to hear her name pass your lips—so degraded as she is ! Bad as all the Spanish women are"—and he said " all " emphatically, including by intention the woman who was the mother of his child—" she is perhaps the worst. Yet you praise her !—you, the very opposite of her in everything—you, one of the noblest, she, one of the most ignoble of your sex ! "

" Do you not see why, dear friend ? " returned Madame with touching gentleness. " Your unhappy wife is so fierce, so excitable, we must find some means of keeping her in good humour, as we keep a child quiet with bonbons"—["Brigand ! " breathed Pepita, her ear against the woodwork.]—" I feel as you do about the odious Spanish Queen ; that she is an infamy, a horror ; but what can I do ! It is a deception if you will, but a harmless one ; and you know what your wife is when she is not amused ! "

" Yes, I know too well ! " answered Mr. Dundas bitterly. " I have not lived with her for fifteen years not to know the galling pains of her hateful yoke."

" Poor fellow ! " said Madame sympathetically. " I should not think there were many soft places ? "

" Oh, the false traitor—the snake—the Judas ; she shall pay for this ! " said the Spaniard under her breath.

" If I can find any other plaything for her I will," continued Madame

with an unmistakeable accent of contempt. "But you see how she haunts me! Never a day free from her!" with a sigh.

"You are an angel of goodness to suffer it!" cried Mr. Dundas.

"Dog!" muttered Pepita, with a vision of her revenge at home.

"It is for your sake," said Madame softly; and Pepita knew that her husband took her rival's hand and kissed it for his answer.

"And coming as she does, haunting me every day, every day, I must prevent those violent outbreaks for which she is famous," continued Madame. "I could not allow her to use in my house such language as I hear she is in the habit of using elsewhere. I should have to take very decided measures if she did; and though nothing of this kind would touch our friendship, still I would rather not have it to do. So, don't you see? it is simply to avoid the chance of anything unpleasant that I have fooled her about this wretched woman, this Isabella of Spain, whom I despise as much as you do."

"I understand you, dear friend, and I honour you," said Mr. Dundas; "but if you could find some other theme how glad I should be! This one is so intensely distasteful to me. I feel aggrieved even that you should have met your husband at the Court."

Madame smiled. She did not say that this too was an invention to please Mrs. Dundas; she simply answered; "And I would not willingly displease you."

Mr. Dundas gave a heavy sigh.

"What a fool I have been!" he almost groaned.

"Ah!" said Madame sympathetically; "if we could but go back on our lives!"

"I would cancel mine; all of it, all!" said Mr. Dundas, with dangerous fervour. Then, sinking his voice, he added, "All but my friendship with you, dear friend!"

"And I would meet you half way," said Madame.

Pepita heard no more. A thousand voices seemed suddenly to break out in her head, mingled with the roar of waters and the clanging of brazen bells. Her brain was on fire, her heart felt like a lump of ice, her throat had closed so that she could not breathe; and then a shower of sparks, a stream of flame, seemed to flash across her eyes, as with a deep groan she sunk on the ground, struck down with the apoplexy of hate and revenge.

What followed was to Leam like a horrible dream where she was bound hand and foot and delivered over to be tortured of men and demons. She saw her father and Madame de Montfort appear suddenly from the arbour; and she felt Madame attempt to draw her away from her mother, by whose senseless body she had cast herself—she resisting fiercely; striking her father's smooth-tongued friend wildly on her mouth as she curved over her like some huge black snake, Leam thought, gracefully trying to raise her from the ground. Then she saw Dr. and Mrs. Corfield standing there, and Alick, too—Alick, with his ugly, tender

face strangely beautified to her in this moment of dream and terror. They too, came suddenly, she did not know how; as if by magic up from the earth or shot through the air.

Dr. Corfield had a small steel blade shining between his fingers. She saw him strip her mother's large soft olive-tinted arm, and then she found herself standing apart, facing the river, and supported by Alick whose eyes were full of tears, and who called her "dear."

After which everything was a blank, save the marble face of her mother, till she found herself once more at home and alone with the one love of her life, her only friend, her sole delight.

But not for long. Pepita's ill-starred life was nearly over, and her sins with her sorrows had come to an end. There was no help for her in heaven or on earth. The saints would work no miracle of healing and science could not. She had to die; to leave the husband whom she had never loved, and who had ceased to love her; to leave her little one, her child, her sweet Heart, to a father to whom she was a stranger and an enemy—to the pains and perils of this cold deceitful English life. Her Leama, her darling—she must wander through the desert as she best could unaided; guardian there was none for her, friend there was none—no one to help her, no, not one!

It was a bitter moment for the Spaniard. Passionate and ignorant, she had been but an undesirable kind of mother for Leam; teaching the child to hate her father—teaching her, indeed, the doctrine of hate all through; setting her in opposition to her surroundings; filling her young head with false pride, ignorant prejudices, foolish fancies; stifling religion under superstition, and keeping her as untaught as useless. Still, she loved this child, this little Leama, with her whole fierce, fervid heart; and if it was not the best kind of motherliness it was at the least the best she had to give.

It was agony to have to leave her; but the moments flew fast, and the hour when all would be over was drawing ever nearer. Her life was ebbing away and there was no hope of salvation. She might curse the Great King whose conquest she was; say incoherently, wildly that she would not die—she would not!—blaspheme God and the saints, man and the angels; but it had to come. Hour by hour she sank lower into the depths of the grave, and hour by hour Leam's fear increased.

She would have no one with her but Leam; she would not see her husband, nor let him know her condition.

"We are alone in the world, you and I," she said at intervals to the child. "You are the only one who loves me, and I am the only one who loves you. Never forget me, Leama. Sweet little Heart, love me always!"

"I will, mamma!" said Leam, not sobbing, not weeping as another girl might, but sitting quite still, looking at her mother with her large dilated eyes dark with terror, and every now and then kissing her powerless hand.

"Do not forget me, Leama!" said Pepita, with a flash of her old jealous passion in her eyes.

"No; I will never forget you, mamma. I will always love you, and you only," answered Leam solemnly.

"No one but me; no other mother but me!" she said again, faintly yet fiercely.

"None, mamma. But, oh! stay with me yourself; do not leave me!" cried the poor child, trembling.

"My Heart, my little soul!" said Pepita yet more faintly, and tender now, not fierce. "Kiss me, Leama; kiss me, little daughter! Never forget me!"

The girl flung herself on the bed, and clasped her slender arms about her mother's neck. Her hair fell down, and covered the face and shoulders of the dying woman like a mourning veil. Her fresh lips pressed themselves against the dear face as if they would have kissed the beloved back to life by the very force of her loving passion. Pepita gave one hoarse and shuddering sigh; and Leam unconsciously kissed away her last breath.

When she unclasped her arms the play was played out, the goal reached. There was no longer a mother with her child, only an orphan watching over a figure of senseless clay—the figure of a woman whose passions were at rest, whose mistakes would be made no more; for the end had come, and she was dead.

At the Seaside.

LIKE the modern love of the picturesque and the enthusiastic devotion to the minutest sights and sounds of natural history, our longing for seaside pleasures is a direct growth of the peaceful times which followed the Great War. Late in the last century a few bathing-machines made their appearance on the southern coasts. George III. showed the fashionable world that life was endurable at Weymouth. But residence at the sea and dalliance by its summer waves was a luxury which no prudent families could enjoy during war-prices, or when Napoleon and his flotilla waited on the opposite shore to swoop down upon England on any dark night. After the general pacification artistic and imaginative pleasures gradually succeeded to the all-absorbing interest of the Peninsular War. Of late years the general diffusion of wealth has combined with these to send people to the seaside. Quickened modes of crossing the Atlantic and the Channel showed men that the sea was no longer the *Oceanus dissociabilis* of Horace. The increase of railways, too, facilitated the conveyance of children to the sea, so that family life suffers no interruption by the prevailing habit. Wordsworth's advocacy of mountain and sea scenery, in which he has since been followed by all the poets of the reflective school, was aided by Scott's objective painting of nature, and has greatly contributed towards a love of the sea. Like most social phenomena, therefore, this enjoyment of seaside pleasures is the result of many different causes. Just as the children, however, round their sand-fort, or the lovers on the cliff-seat, do not trouble themselves about the reasons which brought them there, but gratefully accept the cool air and lovely view, we are well content to leave such speculations to the statist and the future historian. The white sea-birds call shrilly, and the incoming tide is ruffled into silver foam on the long yellow sands. It is the time for enjoyment and not for social science.

The most miserable kind of happiness at the seaside is to be found by visiting Scarborough or Brighton solely for the purpose of mingling in their fashionable gaieties. The frivolities of life may well be reserved for Mayfair and the Season. To fly thence to a fifth-rate imitation of them at crowded hotels by the sea is to contemn the influence of its fresh vast solitude, and deliberately to put out of sight its opportunities for quiet recreation. Yet at a certain period in most men's lives, as in the existence of States, the pride of wealth and luxury thus degrades the sea to minister to its pleasures, and the delights of the Bay of Baïe in the time of Augustus, or of Biarritz under the French Empire, irresistibly claim their votaries. Fortunately human beings recover from this

temporary aberration by milder remedies than those which visit an empire; and the maiden whose sole delight lay in dancing away the blessed hours of moonlight on quiet waters in a fool's Paradise at Scarborough, lives to rejoice in watching her children wetting their feet in the pools of a dull Cornish fishing-village. Those old days retire into dreamland; save for their amusing contrasts with the present, we gladly bestow them as alms for oblivion.

On the other hand, the happiest mode of enjoying the sea is to put on an old coat and thick boots, and then,

procul negotiis
Ut prisa gena mortaliū,

to give oneself up to thorough indolence and receptivity of seaside influences. Telegrams should be strictly interdicted, and only the most unimportant letters forwarded. The holiday should be set apart for some intellectual treat—reading the Laureate's last poem or George Eliot's latest story. Some study, however, out of the ordinary line of a man's business ought to be professed—say geology, or investigations into the marine zoophytes—to redeem idleness from the charge of being idle; or a big book may be taken to the sea, a history or a stiff theological treatise, to be able to put the amiable sophism upon ourselves that we intend to work, to give, in short, a backbone to a molluscous purpose. We lately met a clergyman on a six weeks' tour in Scotland who had thus taken with him Butler's *Analogy* and the judicious Hooker, for much the same reason, we suppose, as the ancient Egyptians were wont to introduce a skeleton at their feasts. Solitude at the seaside is a great mistake. Dürer very suitably introduced the sea as the background of his *Melancholia*. The immensity of the sea overwhelms the personality; but let a man have wife, sister, or friend with him, and then the presence of a kindred soul, and the ordinary everyday remarks upon the sea, vanquish the unvanquished. Above all, no one should seek the sea for enjoyment who is compelled to economise and strictly scan the day's expenses. Butchers have a trick at the seaside of not supplying the finest joints and of charging unconscionable prices, while landladies proverbially must make hay while the sun shines. Unless a man can wholly fling base domestic cares to the winds when he visits the sea, let him spend, say, three weeks there entirely free from anxiety, instead of the month he at first purposed, which would demand nice calculations and unsleeping thrift. Nothing so soon mars a holiday as care. It is the bunch of hyssop in our autumnal cup of joy.

Though it is easy when inland to fancy the sea's delights, to lavish poetic phrases on it, and to persuade oneself, when disinclined to travel, that imagination can satisfy as well as sight, a subtle, ineffable charm does indeed overhang it, which no creative insight, no wealth of language, can catch. From Homer to Tennyson the poets have been at work upon it and cannot express this magic charm. Stansfield's pencil has perpetuated its rougher moods, and Turner its sunlit glories; we hang

enraptured over Mr. Brett's realistic limnings of its summer purples and Mr. Hook's green swells from which the salt spray torn off by the rising breeze almost strikes fresh upon our senses, yet is there a further secret which their artistic touch cannot grasp. The seaside dweller sees it on the dancing waves when the joyful light of dawn comes rippling over them from the gateways of the East, and in the clear sparkles of a noontide sea. He woos it too in the tender aerial blues which float around its face just before the moon seeks her throne in the cloudless azure above. This nameless charm is compounded of glitter, profundity, and extension. No painter has seized it so vividly as Claude, and Wordsworth happily suggests its manifold mystery in the lines—

Stealthy withdrawals, interminglings mild
Of light with shade, in beauty reconciled.

This indefinable sea-charm can only be realised when actually face to face with it. The sea itself can alone satisfy its votary. It is this nameless spell which year by year summons so many susceptible natures within its influence. Like a coy beauty, we cannot win her, and yet we cannot content ourselves away from her presence. Everyone recognises the power and grandeur of the sea in a storm, but only the finest souls are stirred with its marvels when a summer calm holds it in submission, and it is mostly in summer only that people know the sea.

How many have wished to recollect their thoughts on first seeing the ocean! Memory cannot recall them. This is a penalty men pay for travelling at so much earlier an age than did their fathers. Other generations saw the sea for the first time when the mind was formed. Then they could register their feelings as they called Thalatta! Thalatta! Thus in Keble's case it was not until he was twenty, and had taken his degree, that he first caught sight of the sea. Yet this mature vision had its drawbacks. Childhood, and especially boyhood, lost that sense of vastness and power which the sea confers, and the most critical periods for budding genius missed in consequence the mental stimulus which thus accrues. A certain feebleness of language, a falling short in that grandeur of sentiment which marks the greatest poets, may be noticed in Keble's verses, and these defects may probably be attributed in great measure to this want of sea influences. Contrast (of course in style only) the flights of Byron's poetry, that

Eagle with both grappling feet still hot
From Zeus's thunder,

with the polish and glow of *The Christian Year*. The difference is at once apparent. The one is a rush of imaginative vigour which will not be denied vent, and bursts through all barriers; the other rolls obediently between well-ordered banks. The same feature is discernible in the Laureate's poetry, the outcome of early Lincolnshire impressions, where the sea is what the ancients would have called a sea that is no sea, a far-off power shrouded half the year in fog and gloom. The only influence to be named together with the sea is the neighbourhood of

mountains. The glow of aerial colour which is constantly flitting over them reproduces in great measure to a keen perception the perpetual motion and change of the sea. The world's greatest poets have fed their imagination on both.

Yet the first sight of the sea in childhood is none the less an epoch in existence if its stirrings of the soul cannot be recalled. The rapid locomotion that took us to it, the emancipation from lessons and the irksome regularities of home life, the sense of an enlarging horizon of experience, these did but pleasantly lead up to the mystery of mysteries on which hearts had so long been set, and of which for months tongues had loved to prattle. The child's wings were rapidly being fledged. To lie down upon a strange bed amidst sea-sounds and unusual bustle was another delight not unreproduced, we may be sure, in dreams. But morn brought the crowning bliss, to dash down before breakfast without a hat and regardless of all nursery proprieties, over the scanty turf of the "links," past the black windmill where wooden bowls and spoons were turned, across the deep-rutted sandy lane never mended but by wind and weather, with a scramble on the opposite side over the rough stone wall, and then —one look, and there lay Fairyland! Long yellow sands, fringed with fantastically-hung boulders, led down to a vast grey water, heaving and sparkling into infinity, with here and there a golden ripple, and far away one white sail which was carrying modern Robinson Crusoe to islands of the blest, decked with all the wealth of tropic vegetation which a child's imagination could conceive. Yes, there at last was the SEA:—

It is the sea, it is the sea,
In all its vague immensity,
Fading and darkening in the distance!

And then came a rush over the blown sandhills amongst dry bladderwrack and sea-waifs, where the shoes were filled with sand; the glance at the pink sea-stocks and globe campions (all that at that time could be spared them); then the somewhat toilsome drag over wet sands dotted with savages' footprints to the edge, where, wonder of wonders, a thin rope of water came rolling up to break into a little sheet of foam, and then another, which went over the ankles, till at length their meaning flashed upon the mind. These were waves! Then ensued the return with large wistful eyes, and the old domestic's reproachful shout, "Master Philip! how could you go a-wetting your feet before breakfast?" How well it all comes back upon the memory. Yet what a sea rolls between that point of time and the present! Ay de mi, ay de mi.

But the earliest recollection of the sea is not always so benign. As there are boys whose whole inner life opens out under its influence, so there are others whose first remembrance of it is like a frightful dream. They keenly recall the bathing to which they were injudiciously condemned before their nerves had acquired strength and any familiarity with the waves had been established. The horrors of those first bathes haunt them like a bugbear, and they were conducted in a manner, we would fain hope,

which is now everywhere obsolete. No greater refinement of cruelty could be fancied than to take a timid child into a bathing-machine on a rough day, undress him, and thrust him out to an old harridan waiting in the waves to give him the three orthodox dips. The more he screamed the longer did his amphibious persecutor keep him under, always waiting till his mouth was wide open before she immersed him. Add to these horrors the secret fear that she would lose hold of him in what terror magnified into waves mountains high, and the exhaustion consequent upon these mental agonies, and the wonder is that any child of that bygone generation ever again voluntarily entered water. Dreadful as the whole operation undoubtedly was, imagination has probably intensified its troubles, as years kindly erased from the memory its actual details; but a sufficient residuum of horrors is left to warn every parent that he cannot too gently accustom his children, especially if they are at all nervous, to sea-bathing. It is in-calculable how mischievously the opposite course may act upon both their bodily and mental faculties.

Indeed, the influences of the seaside upon a child's mental faculties, especially his imagination, can hardly be overstated. If he be a genius, an embryo artist, poet, or novelist, the whole of his inner being expands, like the anemones which lie, gravel-covered lumps of jelly, till the grateful tide washes them into beauty, or the *delesseria* seaweed, which opens into a glow of rosy crimson as the flowing wave ruffles its quiet rock-pool. The ebbing and flowing of the tide is in itself a perpetual wonder, the first intimation to his budding intellect of the vast forces at work around and within our planet. The affluence of the sea in fish and the grotesque forms of some of them, the white-winged birds that circle and call over its waves, may hereafter lead his mind to these branches of natural history. The wide circle of heaven which arches over the sea, and the mode in which its tints are reflected upon the watery expanse, bestow endless lessons on the harmonies of colour, even if these instructions are unconsciously assimilated. But the ships are perhaps the most entrancing of all these influences, with their mysterious departures for strange shores, their white clouds of sun-kissed canvas, the sudden manner in which, after arriving, it may be during his nightly dreams, the child finds them safely anchored in the morning. Their presence intensifies his longing for seeing the world, and feeds that passion for adventure, inherent in all English hearts, which led his forefathers to range the deep and claim the supremacy of the seas, and which laid the foundations of our great colonial empire. For this reason those parts of the English coast whence few or no sails can be descried are always inferior in interest, at least with masculine minds, to strictly maritime ports and shores. The vastness of the sea without the counter-balancing spectacle of man's mastery over it is apt to oppress rather than expand the mind. And if shipping forms a great element in the child's wondering love of the sea, how much more marvellous to him, from being just as full of wonder and yet touching him more familiarly, are boats! In them he can himself tug at an oar and accompany the fishermen to

their crab-pots, looking over the gunwale at the waving forest of seaweed, Undine's realm, beneath the lustrous swells, and then upwards at the rocks, grim and forbidding even in a calm, and which but frown the blacker when the north wind hurls its breakers on to them, only to be repulsed in clouds of spray. Far out from them, too, runs into the sea a long reef of sharp-edged outliers, where the waves swirl as the fishermen row carefully past, while the child listens with eyes full of awe to their stories of the winter storms and the gallant vessels which have ere now gone to pieces on these cruel teeth. Terror added to beauty has a special fascination for childhood, though in a lesser way it affects us at every stage of life. It will be many a summer before the child can enjoy Mr. Ruskin's masterly analysis of the sea-charm that hangs around an old, wave-beaten, tarred boat, but he can feel something of the boat's influences from his earliest years. "In that bow of the boat is the gift of another world. Without it what prison would be so strong as that white and wailing fringe of sea? What maimed creatures were we all, chained to our rocks, *Andromeda*-like, or wandering by the endless shores, wasting our incommunicable strength, and pining in hopeless watch of unconquerable waves! The nails that fasten together the planks of the boat's bow are the rivets of the fellowship of the world. Their iron does more than draw lightning out of heaven, it leads love round the earth."*

A curious instance of the transcendent love of the sea in a thoughtful nature, and of the poor substitutes which trees or other natural features furnish for its overpowering charm, occurs to us as we write. In Dorothy Wordsworth's *Recollections of a Tour in Scotland* with her brother, the poet, they met Mr. (afterwards Sir Walter) Scott, and Miss Wordsworth says: † "The wind was tossing the branches and sunshine dancing among the leaves, and I happened to exclaim, 'What a life there is in trees!' On which Mr. Scott observed that the words reminded him of a young lady who had been born and educated on an island of the Orcades, and came to spend a summer at Kelso and in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh. She used to say that in the new world into which she was come nothing had disappointed her as much as trees and woods; she complained that they were lifeless, silent, and, compared with the grandeur of the ever-changing ocean, even insipid. At first I was surprised, but the next moment I felt that the impression was natural. Mr. Scott said that she was a very sensible young woman, and had read much. She talked with endless rapture and feeling of the power and greatness of the ocean; and with the same passionate attachment returned to her own native island without any probability of quitting it again."

In boyhood the inner life, with all its emotions, bright fancies, and happy imaginations, retires for a time in the presence of the sea, while the bodily sinews and thews hail it as an ally which will brace them up

* Ruskin's *Harbours of England*.

† 2nd ed., 1874, p. 265.

for the battle of life. The sea is welcomed as a friend when the boy, with Byron's love of swimming, suffers the waves to bear him downwards on their bosom into the dark trough, then with one stroke rises up the green wall of the next swell, and as it curls into creamy spray which would overwhelm him and bear him backwards like a cork head over heels, by one dexterous plunge dives under its rage, and again emerging slides calmly down into the next abyss, ready for another dive at the critical moment. What better discipline could boyhood have for the ups and downs of life than this wrestling with Father Ocean? The delights of pulling a boat backwards and forwards in the harbour soon led to the first timid venture over the swells at its mouth to the open sea beyond, and form another early memory with most boys. And then ensued the entrancing joy of rocking on the waves outside, which was always accompanied by an unspoken dread that it might not be possible to row back again. Sometimes a sailor really had to put out his boat and help the baffled wanderers home. Such minor dangers, too, as dropping an oar, being nearly swamped by a passing steamer, running down a choleric fisherman's boat and being pursued by him with an abundance of bad language and imprecations—these and the like adventures bring out in boys presence of mind and courage, a sense of power, and the habit of self-reliance, which prove invaluable in after-life. On every account he is a wise parent who annually takes his boys to the sea. Let him suffer their sisters to roam with them, tomboys for the nonce, by sandy cove and rocky pool, gathering flowers, wetting their feet, and drinking in health at every pore, and he may laugh at doctors and fear not consumption, the Moloch to whom so many English youths and maidens are annually sacrificed. The *Fräulein* need not accompany the girls; duets and marches may very well be left behind, for they are obtaining an education in outdoor life and gymnastic (as the Greeks called the arts which aim at ensuring bodily perfection); these, during our brief summer, should be permitted altogether to banish the intellectual claims which that people knew as music. For the same reason late hours and excitement ought to be rigidly interdicted at the seaside.

As for the golden days of youth by the sea, who shall venture to paint their pleasures? What noble hopes are then cherished; what high ambitions, what grand purposes entertained! Life and the world and renown, with all their specious power and promise, lie before the young man. He has never known defeat hitherto when he has once set his heart on anything, never been baffled in his plans. More potent than Archimedes, he feels that he holds in his hand the lever which will move the universe. Happy they who have a father at this dangerous period to check them in their extravagant longings, to teach them that power and genius must be directed to one point, not dissipated on manifold ends. Multitudes make shipwreck of the fairest prospects for want of sustained effort in one field of thought. So many foes are leagued against this cardinal virtue, inseparable from success, that

resolution is sorely tried. And to falter herein is fatal. Especially may one's own heart cause him to stumble. Unless youth betimes stops its ears, like Ulysses, some siren, who, as in his age, yet haunts the seaside, may lure him to idleness and so to destruction of many a bright dream; for the generous emotions are strong, and the fire of love blazes forth at a glance or a word. Most people possess a romance whose ghost is laid by the sea, enclosed in a summer month and cast into the ocean of the past. And most people, we may add, are fond at certain times of imitating the fisherman of the *Arabian Nights*, opening the case and suffering the imprisoned spirit to spread himself over the face of heaven and earth. "No man ever forgot," says Emerson,* "the visitations of that power to his heart and brain which created all things new; which was the dawn in him of music, poetry, and art; which made the face of nature radiant with purple light, the morning and the night varied enchantments; when a single tone of one voice could make the heart beat, and the most trivial circumstance associated with one form is preserved in the amber of memory; when we became all eye when one was present, and all memory when one was gone; when the youth becomes a watcher of windows, and studious of a glove, a veil, a ribbon, or the wheels of a carriage; when no place is too solitary, and none too silent for him who has richer company and sweeter conversation in his new thoughts than any old friends, though best and purest, can give him; for the figures, the motions, the words, of the beloved object, are not, like other images, written in water, but, as Plutarch said, enamelled in fire." But all these attachments, which, like morning breezes, merely ruffle the placid waters, as the years pass on culminate with many at the seaside in that true and lasting devotion whose flower is marriage. Thenceforth the sea is sacred in the husband's eyes. Its influences have largely coloured two lives, and those glories never wholly fade. It again becomes the all-sentient sympathising friend, dowered with all the gifts of imagination and fancy, invested with the air of mystery it wore in childhood, which familiarity and absorbing activities in after life had greatly obliterated.

In mature years men deal with the sea as with this old and tried friend. It invites them for a season to indolent repose. Instead of agitating with far-reaching hopes, it soothes with tender memories, soft reminiscences which charm the mind as a waft of its own fragrance delights the senses. The past, with all its joys and fears, attainments and griefs, opens before the man who seeks sea-solace when tired with life's toil. The future does not rise beyond the glittering horizon outspread before him. It is in manhood that we most enjoy the restful influences of the sea. The pensive sport of fishing chimes in well with this mood. Anchored so far out that the cliffs have lost their vivid colours, we idly draw up pollock and rock-codlings, while the boatmen spin their endless yarns of the good times for fish fifty years ago, "afore the French comed into our seas;" or accompany the flotilla of boats to the midnight herring-

fishing, and watch the miles of nets drawn in with their many captives sparkling in the pale autumnal moonbeams. If inclined for more active sports, the fisher can cast his sand-eel from some outlying rock to the bass which come in with the rising tide, and rival salmon in their weight and vigour when hooked. Or, should he be an early riser, let him embark before grey dawn, hoist his sail, and let out lines for mackerel, the while he watches the rippling gold of sunrise dance to him over the eastern waves, and then call out the winged inhabitants of the rocks to their noisy morning evolutions. Sea-fishing is rapidly assuming the dignity of a recognised branch of angling, and in the excessive competition for trout-fishing and extensive system of preserving waters which at present prevail, there is every probability that each summer to come it will increase in popularity.

More frequently the familiar walks of the seaside, the long yellow stretch of sand, the white lighthouse, or the upland down, will induce a pleasing melancholy as manhood recalls the old loves and friendships of which they alone remain mute yet eloquent mementoos. Sundered from fair faces and winning smiles, it may be by death or circumstances strong as death, the whispers of old days, the aspirations long since crushed out of the heart, again wake to life. Sweet and bitter memories succeed one another as light and shade chequer the ocean spread out in front, while we lean on the stone wall by the ripening barley.

Oh, sad it is, in sight of foreign shores,
Daily to think on old familiar doors,
Hearths loved in childhood, and ancestral floors ;
Or, tossed about along a waste of foam,
To ruminant on that delightful home
Which with the dear betrothed was to come ;
Or came, and was, and is, yet meets the eye
Never but in the world of memory,
Or in a dream recalled. *

Even a window in Myrtle Cottage may in fancy frame a face unseen for thirty years, yet never forgotten ; and spite of the old boat on the little beach across the river by the wych-elms looking so commonplace, words were once spoken in it which for two people at least have changed the face of the world.

A merry peal of laughter and the patterning of many feet recall us to the present. We have wandered to the Childrens' Corner, where the sand-castles and mimic forts, each sapped one by one as the relentless waves sweep on, will not unaptly type the future fortunes and aspirations of many amongst these busy little ones. While blessing kind nature for their unconscious minds, who can avoid moralising over his own past at the sight ? And thus the benign offices of the sea to manhood are once more apparent. Retrospection with a view to contentment and thankfulness is chief amongst them. Present work, present duties, present oppor-

* Wordsworth, *Poetical Works*, vol. iv. p. 136.

tunities, is the burden of the everlasting sea-melody to mature life. The music which those monotonous chords call forth from the past is the swan-song of a dead self. The father lives his youth over again at the seaside in his children, has his slower pulses quickened with their glee, and is taught thoughtfulness for others by their wants. Thus age is regenerated by childhood, childhood invigorated by maturity, and the influences of the seaside enable these periods of life to bear reciprocally upon each other. *Paterfamilias* may therefore find some compensations in the hard fate which annually drives him to the sea.

If a man have the least eye for colour, supposing other resources to fail him, residence at the sea may become tolerable by noticing the artistic effects of light on rock-scenery. A splendid effect is produced on a bare Highland scene in autumn when it is clothed in purple sheets of heather; an inland pasture is not easily surpassed in vivid colouring when a sunny June evening brightens out over it after an hour or two of rain. But the intensity of these hues is far exceeded by sea scenery. In addition to the geological structure of the rocks, which forms as it were the groundwork of the picture, the play of light from above and the strong reflected lights of the sea below bring out in enchanted lustre what before was sufficiently vivid, and leave the nooks and crannies in the deepest of shade. Canon Kingsley dwells with special fondness in his *Prose Idylls* upon the brilliant hues of his Devon rocks, and the changes which successively pass over their tints at sunset. But these variations of strongly-chequered light and shade are by no means peculiar to the West of England; they constitute a special charm of any rocky coast. Our painters cunningly seize upon them to give the tone to a sea-piece; and during a prolonged sojourn at the seaside, if a visitor analyses his impressions he will find that much of his affection for the place arises from the familiar yet half-unconscious manner in which his eye is daily soothed by the harmonies of colour it sees on the rock-walls. A seaside place without rocks in the same manner is insufferable after a few days; as well be set down in the desert or imprisoned within four whitewashed walls. The sea, of course, can never lose its interest; its charm is always there, but landwards to be met with nothing but sand and bents is depressing in the extreme. A novelist might well send a troublesome character, who is to be carried off the scene by insanity, to Skegness for a fortnight, which is described as consisting of "a streak of sea, a streak of sand, and a streak of land." Perhaps Cleethorpes might answer the same purpose in a week.

Let us take the sea-bird's wing to the frowning trap headlands of Cornwall, or rock in the fisherman's boat off the majestic sandstone cliffs north of Berwick, while the sun brightens out from the slanting grey curtain of rain-clouds on the horizon. The dark-grey rocks, through their crown of mist, one moment watch sullenly the silver showers that stream over their feet, and listen unmoved to the dull roar of the breakers; next minute the sunlight falls on their wrinkled faces, and, hey

presto ! what a change ! a thousand unexpected points twinkle into prominence, and behind them a thousand cavities retire into deeper gloom as the wave of light sweeps over the craggy barrier to touch its grimness with a myriad delicate tints, and soften its savagery into beauty. But a poet's eye could alone do justice to the glorious spectacle.

Till now you dreamed not what could be done
 With a bit of rock and a ray of sun ;
 But, look, how fade the lights and shades
 Of keen bare edge and crevice deep !
 How doubtfully it fades and fades,
 And glows again, yon craggy steep,
 O'er which, through colour's dreamiest grades,
 The yellow sunbeams pause and creep !
 Now pink it blooms, now glimmers gray,
 Now shadows to a filmy blue,
 Tries one, tries all, and will not stay,
 But flits from opal hue to hue,
 And runs through every tenderest range
 Of change that seems not to be change,
 So rare the sweep, so nice the art
 That lays no stress on any part.

After the fairy vision, with all its positive tints, has passed on and charmed the spectator, there yet remain dim suggestions and half-fancied effects which no words can fix, so changeful, subtle, and evanescent are nature's kaleidoscopic variations ; she fastens on each peak and cornice, each flaw where frost has chipped the rock-wall, each lichen spot which has softened its harshness, and then,

Indifferent of worst or best,
 Enchants the cliffs with wreaths and hints
 And gracious preludings of tints,
 Where all seems fixed, yet all evades
 And indefinably pervades
 Perpetual movement with perpetual rest ! *

If we prosaically ask science by what magic spells these changes are wrought, Professor Tyndall will explain that they are due to the dichroitic action of light. The sky-particles or molecules of light are strewn everywhere through the atmosphere, and while the reflected light is blue the light transmitted is orange or red.

There are persons who are satisfied with tamer scenery at the seaside, who can enjoy Withernsea equally with Ilfracombe. The sea itself is all in all to minds so happily framed ; accessories of sand or rocks or inland beauty seem to such people almost impertinent intrusions upon the one great feature. Fortunately for those who must have rocks, as well as for those contented with the sea itself, to say nothing of the varied range of likings between these extremes, the United Kingdom offers an endless choice of sea-towns, each with its distinctive features. That

* Lowell, *Pictures from Appledore*, Poems, ed. 1873, p. 391.

isolation which pleases Germans at Heligoland may be obtained by Englishmen at Rothesay, Colonsay, and many other places in the West of Scotland, or in Inishmurray and the numerous other islands sprinkled round the West of Ireland. Other shores are renowned for sands or for fine sea, for rock scenery, for fishing, for fashion, for boating, for every possible form of pleasure connected with the sea. If one English place were to be named where all the varied charms of seaside life could be enjoyed in the greatest perfection, Whitby must take precedence of all others. To the attractions of breezy heights, a fine river, and inland walks of rare beauty, it adds temptations to the bather, artist, antiquarian, and geologist, pleasant society owning little allegiance to the tyranny of fashion, the finest of sea and waves, an old town which carries the visitor back to the Middle Ages, a new one of which every stone tells of Hudson, the railway king, a churchyard set on so high a cliff that *Sic itur ad astra* might be inscribed on the steps leading up to it, an abbey of which the graceful ruins are redolent of the piety of Elfeda and St. Hilda, of St. John of Beverley and St. Wilfrid of York. Here, too, the great Council of Streaneshalch was held, a cardinal event in English ecclesiastical history, and the curious service of the three barons alluded to in *Marmion* was rendered. Altogether it is unique amongst English watering-places. If the archaeologist desire still earlier memories, let him visit quaint little Boscastle, the "silent tower" of Bottreaux, and, above all,

Tintagil, half in sea and high on land,
A crown of towers,

or Milton's "great vision of the guarded Mount." In short, if a pilgrimage to the English cathedrals is to read the history of the land carved in stone, it may safely be asserted that the archaeology and associations of our sea-shores give in their most pleasant form, not merely the history, but the legends, poetry, and romance of the kingdom as well.

Old age finds no keener outdoor pleasure than to revisit the sea-shores familiar to it from childhood. Then memory and reflection summon the past to their silent sessions, as the man, cheered, it may be hoped, with all of love and deference which should accompany old age, watches at evening the fishing-boats hoist their sails to pass the harbour-bar ere the tide falls, and so, with their large brown spread of canvas, sweep majestically into the night. The grandchildren, it may be, play around; their father walks up and down, unfolding to his approving wife in the intervals of his cigar the plan of his great work *On Dimorphism*, which is to waft him on to fame. All things around him, the aged man ponders, are full of hope and innocent enjoyment, each looking on to some higher stage, some blessing to blossom in the future. Has not this reflection a comfortable bearing on his own years, which are fast nearing their earthly term? And if the inestimable boon be further granted him of knowing that his life has not altogether been spent uselessly and selfishly, if he be conscious of a good fight not unfairly fought, if not a few memories of kindly deeds beset him, of efforts made not wholly in vain to carry out the

law of love in his dealings with others, if peaceable thoughts and pure fancies and righteous deeds and helping words have been the diet on which he has fed his soul, who would not envy him this retrospect of life, mellowed by the sea's freshness, and with each hard outline softened by its gracious influences? Then, turning from the past to the present, the sea spread out before him, with its sails mysteriously sinking below the horizon to seek another world, must needs remind him of the numberless philosophers and poets who have loved to view in it "that immortal sea which brought us hither," as well as the sea which rounds our little life, the unknown waters on which, when our anchors are once weighed, we must darkling make our voyage. The sea is thus the latest, as it was our earliest, instructor. Its vastness, its brightness, its union of perpetual agitation with central peace—all these qualities are now but symbols of the future state, as they served in youth for the work of fancy, or of encouragement and solace in manhood. From this world's sea old age thus insensibly passes to the "sea of glass like unto crystal" before the throne of God. Finally, in order that it may strengthen the man about to suffer this "sea-change" in a higher sense than Shakespeare ever dreamt, the notion of trustfully waiting is also inherent in the sea. Lowell seldom wrote grander words than when he thus dwells on this aspect of the sea and the home beyond:—*

The drooping sea-weed hears, in night abyssed,
 Far and more far the wave's receding shocks,
Nor doubts, for all the darkness and the mist,
 That the pale shepherdess will keep her tryst,
 And shewward lead again her foam-fleeced flocks.
And, though Thy healing waters far withdraw,
 I, too, can wait and feed on hope of Thee
And of the dear recurrence of Thy law,
 Sure that the parting grace that morning saw
 Abides its time to come in search of me.

Sacrificial Medicine.

THE world has done wrong to laugh at the old lady who reproved her sailor grandson for "telling her such a scandalous fib as that he had seen a fish fly in the air;" but restored her confidence to the hopeful youth when he proceeded to narrate how he had picked up a wheel of Pharaoh's chariot on the Red Sea shore. Practically we all jump easily at beliefs towards whose level we have already climbed by previous knowledge (or previous prejudice, as it may chance), and refuse, donkey-wise, to budge an inch towards those which happen to be on a plane above our preconceived notions of what either is, or ought to be. It is this propensity of course which makes the most baseless calumny mischievous by paving the way for the next slander against its object. And it is it, also, which grants interminable leases of life to false systems of physics and religion, by securing a welcome for every fiction and fallacy which at any time may seem to favour them, and closing the door in the face of truths which militate against and might explode them.

A curious study of the "Grammar of Assent," as used by the majority of mankind in the matter which comes nearest to their own business and bosoms might, I think, be made by unearthing the preconceived notions and preparatory ideas which must needs exist as regards the Healing Art, and which can have enabled doctors confidently to prescribe and patients meekly to accept the horrid and shocking remedies in use from the earliest period ; remedies of which it is a mild criticism to say that they were worse than the diseases they professed to cure. Had the minds of men concerned with medical enquiries been really free from antecedent convictions—blank sheets of paper whereon Nature could have written down her facts, which Experience might have read and collated—it is clear enough that good diet, exercise, and cleanliness, and the occasional use of simple preparations of herbs, would early have constituted the primitive and sound rules of medical science ; to be supplemented as time went on by discoveries of the therapeutic value of more rare vegetable substances, and of a few minerals. Never could practical observation, by any possibility, have suggested that it would be beneficial to a sick man to make him swallow potable gold, or powdered skulls, or a bolus of decomposed old toads and earthworms. The *un-“scientific use of the imagination,”* can alone have dictated these and scores of no less absurd and obnoxious prescriptions, prompted by some *à priori* theory of what *ought*, antecedently to experience, to be suitable for the cure of disease, and "in accordance with the eternal fitness of things."

What, then, were the notions in obedience to which these marvellous remedies were ordained? If we exclude from present consideration all the really useful therapeutic agents, discovered doubtless by genuine experience and recorded by the ancient physicians, Hippocrates and Galen, Dioscorides and Avicenna, and all the rest, and also set aside those which, though not really useful, might have been readily mistaken for being so by imperfect early observation—we find the immense residue of absurd and monstrous recipes to fall into two categories, namely, the Remedies which were exceedingly Costly, and the Remedies which were either very Painful or very Disgusting. In other words, a large part of the medical science of all past ages proves that the doctors and their patients valued remedies *in proportion to the price to be paid for them*, either in money or in suffering; in short, adopted freely the Doctrine of Sacrifice as applied to medicine. Considering that Nature nearly always proceeds on precisely the opposite track—that she does not ask us “to do some great thing,” but, like the true prophet, only bids us “wash and be clean;” makes the cheapest and commonest things the most wholesome, and affords us normally, by our instinctive desire or loathing, the surest test of the fitness or unfitness of food for our use—there is something exceedingly curious in the all but universal assumption of mankind that it was only necessary to find something particularly rare and expensive, or else something extraordinarily revolting, to obtain a panacea for all the woes of mortality. It was ridiculous (in the estimation of our forefathers) to suppose that a great noble or king should dissolve pearls in his drink, or swallow liquid gold, and yet, forsooth! be no better after all than a poor wretch who could afford himself only a little milk or water. Still more incredible was it that a man should submit to some agonizing scarification or actual cautery, or should compel himself to bolt some inexpressibly disgusting mess which his doctor had taken a year to concoct and distil through a score of furnaces and retorts, and yet, when all was over, receive no more benefit than if he had endured no hardship, or had only drunk some cowslip julep or herb tea. Such tame and impotent conclusions could not be received for a moment. If patients would only *pay* enough or *suffer* enough, they *must* be cured. This, it really seems, was the underlying conviction of men of old, on which half the therapeutics of past times were unconsciously based.

Let us cull a few illustrations of the ingenious development of these principles by the invention of nostrums distinguished by one or other of the grand characteristics, roughly definable as Costliness or Nastiness. Perhaps ere the close of our brief review we may find we have less reason than we fancy at starting to congratulate ourselves on the disappearance of this phase of human folly, or to rest assured that inductive science alone now rules in the sick-room, and that neither doctors nor patients retain any faith in Sacrificial Medicine.

The use of Costly things as remedies for disease, constitutes a kind of *Haute Médecine* necessarily of limited application. With the exception

of the great search for the *Aurum Potabile* in the Middle Ages, there are much fewer traces of it than of the other form of sacrifice, in which the patient *payait de sa personne*. Everybody could be scarified or made to swallow worms and filth, but there were not many patients who could afford to pay for emeralds to tie on their stomachs in cases of dysentery, as recommended by Avenzor, nor for "eight grains of that noble lunar medicine, the wine of silver," or for "dissolved pearls," either of which (Matthioli assures us) is "sovereign against Melancholy." Dioscorides might in vain recommend powdered sapphires for starting eyes, or St. Jerome vaunt their virtues for many other troubles, to the majority of sufferers in their own or any other age. Coral was more within popular reach, and probably a considerable number of believing souls have followed Galen's prescription and tried its use for spitting of blood, and Pliny's recommendation of it for the stone. Avicenna found that a cordial made of it is "singularly productive of joy," and Matthioli says it has "truly occult virtues against epilepsy," whether "hung about the neck or drunk in powders."* Emeralds or rubies, and even silk (then a rarer substance in Europa than now) afford, according to Dioscorides, relief in a variety of ailments, but of course nothing could be so generally, and indeed universally, useful as gold. He who could discover how to make men actually drink the most costly of metals, would teach them nothing less than the secret of immortality. The *Aurum Potabile*, or noble "Solar Oyl," especially when mixed with the "Lunar Oyl" of silver, and Mercurial Oyl, forms, as Bolnest assures us, "a great Arcanum, fit to be used in most diseases, especially in chronick." By itself alone, indeed, the drinkable gold was understood to be an Elixir of Life—a conclusion not a little remarkable when we consider that the only real value of the metal is its convenience as a circulating medium, and for the fabrication of ornaments, and that the artificial importance thus attached to it must have so affected men's minds as to cause them to idealize it as a sort of divine antidote to disease and death.

In an earlier and truer hearted age, Paradise was believed to be a Garden, and it was the Fruit of a Tree of Life which would make men live for ever. But when, as Gibbon satirically observes, in the dissolution of the Roman world, men coveted only a place in a Celestial City of gold and pearl, the secret of immortality was sought (not inappropriately) at the bottom of a Rosierucian crucible.

* As the modern mind may be a little puzzled as to the mode in which some of these substances can be introduced into our internal economy, the following extract from the *Family Dictionary* of Dr. Salmon (1696) may throw light on the subject. "CORAL, to prepare.—Take such a quantity as ye think convenient. Make it into a fine powder by grinding it upon a Prophyry or an Iron Mortar. Drop on it by degrees a little rose-water, and form it into balls for use. After this manner Crabs-eyes, Pearl, Oyster shells, and Precious stones, are prepared to make up Cordials compounded of them and other suitable materials for the strengthening of the heart in fevers, or such like violent diseases, and to restore the Decays of nature." Ebony is swallowed by rasping it in shavings and making a decoction.

There was, it must be confessed, a profound *vulgarity* in this whole system of Costly Medicine, which it would be flattering to ourselves to think we had in our day quite overpassed and discarded. But in truth, though we are not wont to dissolve pearls or powder emeralds, or drink Solar, or even Lunar "Oyl," it may be fairly asked whether we do not contrive to melt down a handful of sovereigns in every attack of illness, to very little better purpose than if we had simply given them to an old alchemist to put in his furnace and make for us an Elixir of Life? What are those long rows of items in our druggist's bill for draughts, embrocations, liniments, blisters, gargles, and what not, represented when the housemaid clears our room for convalescence by a whole regiment of quarter-emptied phials and pill-boxes on our table? What are those considerable drafts recorded in our checkbook, not only for the attendance of our customary medical adviser (which might be reasonable), but for the visits of the eminent consulting physician, brought down, perchance, fifty or five hundred miles to look at us for five minutes while we lay speechless in our fever? Did anybody ever use one-half, or even one-third, of the expensive medicines ordered in every illness from the pharmacy day after day? Or did anybody find a medical man, in view of a patient's straitened circumstances, telling his anxious friends that the remains of the last bottle of his physic would answer as well as a new one, or that they might readily change it, by adding a few drops of some fresh ingredient, instead of ordering another six ounces from the chemist, to be set aside in its turn half used, to-morrow? Or (what is still more to the purpose) did anybody ever hear of a case wherein the physician summoned for consultation (possibly at enormous cost) has given his honest opinion that the regular medical attendant of the patient has mistaken his case, and that the treatment ought to be altogether reversed? We all know beforehand, with tolerable certainty, that the new doctor will emphatically confirm all that his learned *confrère* has said and done, and assure the weeping relatives that "nothing could have been more judicious" than his treatment; and then perhaps he will add (just to remove the appearance of total uselessness from his own visit) the recommendation of some trifling modification, which "may now be introduced, though hitherto it would have been out of question." Cordially exchanging a hand-shake (and possibly also a head-shake) with his scientific brother, after eating a good luncheon and pocketing his handsome fee, the consulting physician jumps into his carriage, and cheerfully quits the house of mourning. But what has he done there? Is there, then, *never* a case in which the local doctor is egregiously mistaken, and his abler colleague knows it, and is aware he is losing the patient's chance of recovery by his wrong treatment? If there be but one such case in a dozen (and, considering how "doctors differ," we should have supposed there must be one in every two or three), what judgment shall we pass on the man who sets his professional loyalty to his colleague above the duty of dealing honestly with the agonised parents, husbands, wives, children,

who have sought his aid (often at great sacrifice) to save the life dearest to them on earth? If any of us have ever chanced to commit that great *lèse majesté* to the Faculty of consulting two physicians at the same time, unknown to one another, it will probably have happened to us to receive from each learned gentleman a different diagnosis of our case and different advice how to treat it. By what singular fatality, then, can it so uniformly occur, that when they are brought *together* for formal consultation, Doctor No. 2 so invariably confirms emphatically all that Doctor No. 1 has said and done on our behalf? Surely till this mystery be cleared up it does not appear we are much farther from the practice of Sacrificial Medicine when we pay a hundred guineas to fetch Sir Welbred Smoothwell from London, to consult with Dr. Potherham Wronghead in the country, than was our unjustly ridiculed ancestor, ten generations back, when he gave as many moidores to his "leech," to be melted down in his crucible for the concoction of that great Arcanum, the "Solar Oyl?" The same idea has been at the bottom of both proceedings, namely, that if we do but spend money enough a cure *must* follow.

But, as I remarked before, the notion that Costliness of itself is a test of medicinal virtue, has been necessarily far less prolific of results than the kindred idea that by the Pain and Disgust entailed on a patient, might be estimated the value of the remedy applied to his disease. As to disgust, it would really appear as if some ancient prophets of the healing art, some Phœbus Epicurius or Esculapius must have laid down as a principle for the selection of health-restoring compounds and concoctions: "By their nauseousness ye shall know them." Else were the recipes for all the hideous, abominable, witch-broths, wherewith the older books of medicine are replete, quite unaccountable on any theory of human sanity. Many of them (which weak-souled patients have swallowed by the ounce and the pound) were of a kind which it is quite impossible to quote; nor can we wonder that, as Plato tells us, the Athenian physicians were wont to engage the great rhetorician Gorgias to accompany them and persuade their patients to take their prescriptions. Let the following, however, be taken as moderate examples:—

"Take what Animal soever thy fancy best liketh, and thou thinkest most fit to prepare. Kill it and take it (but, separate nothing of its impurities, as feathers, hoofs, hairs, or other heterogeneous substance); bruise all in a large and strong mortar to a fit consistency, put it then into a vessel for putrefaction, and put upon it of the blood of animals of the same kind so much as may well moisten it; or, which is better, cover it all over. Shut close the vessel, and set it to putrefie, in *fimo equino* for forty dayes that it may ferment." (The result is to be distilled, calcined, rectified, and distilled over again and again, "seven times to separate its phlegme," till finally) "thou hast a pleasant (!!), safe, and noble Animal Arcanum to fortifie the animal life, and restore health and vigour to its languishing spirit, till God doth call for its final dissolution and separation."—*Aurora Chymica*, p. 6.

This was bad enough, but a great advance (in the line of sacrifice) was made when to the mere odiousness, we may say beastliness, of the dose *per se*, could be added the horror of eating what had once formed

part of a human body,—in short, of cannibalism. The *ordonnances* which follow really seem to have a connection with ancient idol rites of human sacrifice, and possibly (had we means of tracing them) might be fathered on the earliest worshippers of Hesus or of Odin. The seasons of the year (Spring and Autumn) wherein the victim must die (very carefully defined in these prescriptions) seem to give colour to this view. Down to the conquest of Mexico by the Spaniards, Helps tells us, the Aztecs used yearly to slay a young man in spring, that the nobles might eat his heart as a sort of sacrament. Any way, it is rather startling to find that just two hundred years ago in London the Physician in Ordinary to the King recommended cannibalism to Englishmen without the smallest apology or hesitation!

A Mummiall Quintessence.

Take of the flesh of a sound young man dying a natural death about the middle of August, three or four pounds. Let the flesh be taken from his thighs or other fleshy parts. Put it into a fit glass and pour upon it spirit of wine. Let it stand so three or four days. Take out the flesh and put it upon a glass plate, and imbibe it with spirit of salts. Let it stand uncovered, but in the shade, where no dust or other filth may fall upon it. Be sure you often turn it, and being well dried, you may put it up in a fit jar and keep it for use.—*Aurora Chymica*, Chap. III.

A still more efficacious remedy, “producing wonderf^{ul} effects both in preserving and restoring health,” may be obtained by distilling, filtering, calcining, and coagulating this “Mummiall” till it have a “saccharine taste,” when the “matter may be left of the thickness or consistency of honey, which must be kept in glass vessels closely shut.” (*Ibid.* p. 8.)

If the “sound young man” should have been killed in the spring instead of in “the middle of August,” the learned Dr. Bolnest is not without a remedy. His flesh is indeed no longer useful for a “Mummiall,” but his blood may be made into a “very high balsam, exceeding much the powers and virtue of natural balsam; a potent preservative in time of pestilence, leprosie, palsie, and gout of all sorts.”

Take of such blood a large quantity. Gather in glass vessels. Let it settle some time till it hath thrown out all its waterish humour, which separate by wary inclination. Take now of this concrete blood five or six pounds, which put to ten or twelve pints of spirits of wine. Shake them well together, and let it digest six or eight days in warm ashes. Distil. Add the fixed salt drawn out of the *caput mortuum* of the blood by “calcination” “solution,” “filtration,” “congelation,” often repeated; “and what shall remain behind is the Arcanum of Blood” (p. 10).

When obtained in the manner above described, this invaluable remedy is “to be taken in broth, or treacle-water, with a fasting” (and let us devoutly hope an unusually vigorous) “stomach.” Only one caution is necessary. The “sound young man’s” blood must have been shed “when Mercury was above the horizon and in conjunction with the Sun in Gemini or Virgo.”

After the broth of man’s blood, a “Balsamick Remedy for Arthritic Pains,” composed of the bones of a man “which hath not been buried fully a year,” beat up into a powder, calcined and applied on lint,

appears a comparatively mild and pleasant receipt. So likewise is the "Quintessence of Toads," to be composed in the month of June or July of a "great quantity of overgrown old toads," reduced, calcined, and distilled as usual, and then "dissolved in spirit of oranges, or treacle-water, ready for use," either externally—when it cures "cancers and pestilential venom"—or internally, against "all sorts of poison."

The above prescriptions are taken, be it said, not from the manual of one of those vulgar quacks to whom we are too apt to credit every absurdity of ancient medicine, but from a serious treatise by Edward Bolnest, Physician in Ordinary to the King (1672), dedicated to George Duke of Buckingham, and described on the title-page as "Shewing a Rational (!) Way of preparing Animals, Vegetables, and Minerals for a Physical Use, by which they are made most efficacious, safe, and pleasant Medicines for the Preservation and Restoration of the Life of Man." How honest was the worthy author in his belief in his Mummiall Quintessence, and all the rest, may be judged from his frank avowal "to the Reader" that the medicines prescribed he might "in some measure in time of need trust to," because, adds Dr. Bolnest candidly, "I never yet from the best of medicines always found those certain effects I could have desired."

These were, however, refined preparations compared to the prescriptions in use in still earlier generations. In the great folio of M. Pietro Andrea Matthioli (Venice, 1611), adorned with hundreds of really admirable woodcuts of medicinal herbs and flowers, there are directions for rubbing wounds with cow-dung, swallowing beeswax, silk, sweat, and saliva, and drinking hare's blood and dog's dung dissolved in milk as a cure of dysentery. Nervous people are to dine on cooked vipers. Persons with the tooth-ache are to apply to their teeth a serpent's skin steeped in vinegar, or to powder the callosities on a horse's legs, and stuff their ears therewith. A black eye may be treated with a poultice of human milk, incense, and the blood of a tortoise. For the not very serious affection of hiccup a beverage is recommended, of which the chief ingredient is the flesh of a mummy; thus affording us further evidence that Cannibalism survived in medicine, and was approved by the faculty in Italy as well as England, down to a very recent period. Besides these "strange meats," Matthioli regularly classifies in a table a multitude of what he is pleased to call "simple medicines," among which are to be found the bodies, or parts of bodies, of wolves, scorpions, centipedes, ostriches, beavers, and dogs, the cast-off skins of serpents, the horns of unicorns (when attainable!), the hoofs of asses and goats, beeswax, silk, asphalt, and several filthy substances which cannot here be named. Albertus Magnus (*vide* the curious little black letter volume, *Le Grat Albert*, in the British Museum) orders nervous patients to eat eagles' brains, whereby they may acquire the courage of the king of birds; while the brains of the owl, the goat, the camel, &c., convey the peculiar qualities of each of those animals. Pliny's great work, it is need-

less to say, is a repertory of marvellous counsels and observations. Earth taken out of a human skull acts as a depilatory, and benefit is derived from chewing plants which have happened to grow in the same unpleasant receptacle. On the principle, we presume, of "I am not the rose, but I have dwelt near the rose," herbs growing on a manure heap are found specially efficacious as remedies for quinsy. The hair of man, taken from a cross, is good for quartan fevers, and human ear-wax is the only proper application to a wound occasioned by a human bite. The uses of saliva are numberless, and fill a whole chapter of the *Natural History*. "Fasting spittle," in particular, applied to the eyes is an infallible cure for ophthalmia—a remedy which Persius treats with blame-worthy scepticism as an old-womanly practice. In cases where bread has stuck in the throat, a piece of the same loaf should be inserted in the ears. The use of the fluid which exudes from the pores of the skin is so valuable that (Pliny assures us) the owners of the Grecian gymnasia made a thriving trade by selling the scrapings of the bodies of athletes, which, "compounded with oil, is of an emollient, calorific, and expletive nature." If any lady desire to cultivate an interesting and pallid appearance, she ought to imitate Drusus, who drank goats' blood to make it appear that his enemy Cassius had poisoned him. For Melancholy (an affection which seems to have given great concern to the old doctors) Dioscorides recommends black hellebore held in the mouth—certainly a recipe on homeopathic principles, since a mouthful of hellebore would scarcely naturally serve, like the Psalmist's wine and oil, either to make glad the heart of man or to give him a cheerful countenance. A better remedy for the same Melancholy is "broth of old cock"—our Scotch friend Cockaleekie.

For some unexplained reason, two only among the ills to which flesh is heir, and they among the most serious—Frenzy and Inflammation of the stomach—seem to have escaped from the dread régime of Sacrificial Medicine, and indeed are treated with surprising lenity. Dioscorides thinks that Frenzy can be cured by asparagus and white wine, and considers that the patient suffering from gastritis should have a plaster of roses applied to the seat of his disease!

Beside the "exhibition" of nauseous and revolting draughts, boluses, and pills, the system of Sacrificial Medicine has, at all times, commanded many other ingenious resources for the creation of unnecessary pain, trouble, and annoyance to sick persons and their friends. If, for example, a stiff-necked patient were unmanageable in the matter of some particularly disagreeable dose, he might still be induced to go on vexing nature by some out-of-the-way diet, and potions repeated at stated intervals, till faith or life succumbed in the struggle. One old physician, *AEtius*, in this way prescribed for the gout a separate dietary for every month of a whole year. Another, the great Alexander of Tralles, ordained 365 potions, so arranged as to furnish out a course for two years; whereupon Dr. Freind, the learned author of the *History of Physick* remarks that "his receipts

were as good as any of those which our new pretenders to physick make use of;" but adds the discouraging *dictum*, "After all gout is a dis-temper with which it were best not to tamper!"

Then there were fearful tortures in the way of excoriations, of which St. John Long's famous remedy was a notable example—blisters, cauteries, and setons, too unpleasant to dwell upon. Scarification was a comparatively merciful form of these inflictions. It was practised, according to Prosper Albinus (*Hist. Phys.* p. 17) in the following agreeable manner: "First make a strait (tight) ligature on the leg; then rub the leg below it, put it into warm water, and beat *till it swells*, and so scarify!" Something worse than this was practised down to the present generation in the case of wounds. It is in the writer's recollection that an unhappy groom who had lost a piece of flesh out of the calf of his leg sought assistance after his accident from a motherly old cook, the medical adviser in ordinary of the whole household. The good woman evidently held the doctrine of Sacrificial Medicine deep in her soul, as well as a due estimate of the utility, under all circumstances, of the art of cookery. Encouraging the poor young man with suitable reflections on the purifying use of salt and fire, she accordingly rubbed a handful from her saltbox into the wound, and then held the miserable limb steadily to the kitchen fire!

A bath of blood has been frequently employed to resuscitate exhausted patients. When Cesār Borgia barely survived swallowing his share of the bottles of poisoned wine which his respectable father Pope Alexander VI. had intended for the nine cardinals, but took by mistake for himself and his son, an ox was brought into Cesār's apartments and disembowelled, to enable him to get into it and receive such vitality as the warm bleeding carcase might impart. We are here at the point where Sacrificial Medicine assumes the vicarious form, and the poor brutes are made to suffer instead of the human patients for the benefit of the latter. In an account of the birth of the Duc de Bourgogne, grandson of Louis XIV., in the *Curiosités Historiques* (p. 48), amid the description of the raptures of the splendid court assembled on the occasion, there is a casual mention of an incident affording a wonderful contrast to all this royal joy and magnificence. The attendant chief *accoucheur*, the celebrated Dr. Clement, to prevent suffering on the part of the mother (the Dauphine), applied to her person the skin of a sheep, newly flayed. To obtain this quite fresh, a butcher was engaged to skin the animal alive, in the adjoining room; and being anxious to offer the skin as quickly as possible to the doctor, he carried it into the chamber of the Dauphine, leaving the door open. The sheep, in its agony, followed him, and ran in bleeding and skinless among the shrieking crowd of courtiers and grandes. In modern times, worse things than these are done to animals, professedly for the benefit of mankind; but they are now performed quietly in physiological laboratories, not paraded in public, else it is to be believed that even the most selfish amongst us would cry "Hold! we desire no cure of disease, no scientific knowledge, at any such horrible price."

Once more, there was a class of *Sacrificial Remedies*, whose merit consisted in requiring the patient to travel a long way, or to apply to some hardly accessible personage, to obtain relief. There were *Holy Wells* having no medicinal properties whatever, which cured all the multitudes of people who made long and painful pilgrimages to reach them. More remarkable still were the benefits derived in cases of *scrofula* from being touched by a king—a privilege, it may be safely guessed, not accorded without some delay and solicitation, and possibly not without fees to royal attendants, scarcely disinterested witnesses of the miracles which followed. The history of this particular delusion would alone form a very curious chapter, since *Archbishop Bradwardine*, in 1348 appealed to the whole world in proof of the wonder, till *Samuel Johnson's* scarred and mighty head was subjected to the royal touch. When we recall the fact that only in the eighteenth century did a special religious service for the ceremony cease to form a part of the *Liturgy of the Church of England*, we do not seem to ourselves to have yet advanced a great way beyond this harmless superstition. Indeed, it is only in the present generation that the scientific name of the malady has generally superseded its familiar title of the “King's Evil,” or by ellipsis “the Evil,” by which it is even now known in remote parts of the country.

Where it was impossible to obtain help from a king, there yet remained the possibility of being touched by somebody else, who might possess some rare and peculiar privilege and fitness for healing disease. The odd malady, popularly called “shingles,” for example, somehow suggested to the sufferers the desirability of having recourse to some special agency of relief, and this was found in persons who had either themselves eaten the flesh of an eagle, or whose fathers or ancestors had done so. Within the last thirty years a gentleman's servant in Wales has been known to perform a journey of forty miles across the mountains to be touched by a man whose grandfather had eaten an eagle.

Finally, there is a large heterogeneous class of prescriptions, obviously owing their origin to the principle of *Sacrificial Medicine*, whose simple rule has been to prevent the miserable patient from adopting any mode of relief for his sufferings which Nature might point out, and adding to them fresh pain by any ingenious device which may occur to his physician. Of this kind was the treatment of fever in vogue till quite recently, when the patient was carefully shut up in a close room, with well-curtained bed and warm bedclothes, and was prohibited from relieving his thirst with any cold drink. Truly, if *Marcellus Sidetes*, who is said to have written forty-two books in “heroic” verse “concerning distempers,” had given us a picture of all the misery which must have been occasioned in the world by the really *insolent* disregard of Nature and common sense shown in these matters—how many thousands of lives have been thrown away, and through what maddening misery the survivors must have struggled back to life—those poems, instead of being forgotten by the world, might have done us precious service by reminding us that there is some counterweight to be

placed in the scale wherein we are wont to measure our debts of gratitude to medical science.

Another appalling device was that of the renowned English physician John of Gaddesden, who introduced the practice of treating the small-pox by wrapping up the patient in scarlet, hanging his room with scarlet, and in fact compelling him to rest his feverish eyes only on that flaring hue. John tried this notable device, according to his own showing, on one of the sons of King Edward I. (it does not appear to which he refers), and complacently adds to his report, "et est bona cura." In those days, however, doors and windows were not made air-tight, and up the capacious chimneys a considerable portion of fresh air must always have rushed. It was reserved for a later generation to perfect the ingenious system for aggravating and intensifying fever by pasting down the modern window, closing the registers, and (as a climax) engaging nurses to lie beside the sufferer to keep up the heat! The writer heard some years ago from the lips of an old gentleman now deceased, the recital of his own treatment as a boy, in or near London, under a severe attack of small-pox. His life being specially valuable as that of an only son, his affectionate parents, by the advice of a distinguished physician, obtained the services of *two fat women*, who were established permanently in bed on each side of the child during the whole course of the disease! What stipend was offered to tempt these poor obese females to perform this awful service, has escaped from the record.

Reading over all these marvellous prescriptions, it is a refreshing exercise to picture the fashionable "leech," the Gull or Thompson of the period, Physician in Ordinary to the King or Queen, suave and solemn, filled to the brim with all the conscious dignity of Science, standing beside the sick-bed of some mighty prince or peer, and giving to the awe-stricken attendants his high commands to hang the room with scarlet cloth, or to bring to the patient one of the horrid messes prepared with such infinite pains under his direction, in his own laboratory. We can almost hear him condescendingly explaining to the chief persons present what occult relationship exists between the small-pox and the scarlet cloth, or how the Arcanum of Toads comes to be specially valuable, having been composed of the fattest old toads, selected precisely at the right season—*videlicet* midsummer. Of course, in each successive generation there was nothing for the unlearned laity to do but to bow submissively to the dicta of the exponent of Science as it existed at the time. People may always laugh at what is past and gone; but to suspect that living men may be mistaken, or that new systems of medicine, philosophy, or theology, may be destined, like the old, to "have their day and cease to be," is audacity to which no one should advance. We dare not, therefore, suggest that to our grandsons, half our modern nostrums (of which the fashion comes in freshly one season and usually falls into disrepute a few years after) may possibly appear scarcely a degree less ridiculous than the Arcanum of Toads or the Mummial Quintessence. It was not

much worse, after all, to make a patient drink a dead man's blood than to rob him of his own, in the *Sangrado* style to which (in the memory of us all) the world owes the loss of Cavour. It would have been a mercy to a poor Florentine lady, lately deceased, had her physicians counselled her merely to eat earthworms pickled in vinegar, or green lizards boiled alive in oil, as recommended by Dr. Salmon, instead of bleeding her from the arm nineteen times in the fortnight following her confinement and (as may be readily understood) preceding her untimely death.

Sacrificial Medicine, however, in its simpler and more easily recognisable forms, is undoubtedly on the wane, though a good deal of its spirit may still be traced in our behaviour to the sick. To Homeopathy (as to many another kind of heresy) we probably owe somewhat of the mitigation of orthodoxy; and children, noticing the busts of Hahnemann in the shop windows, may be properly taught to bless that great Deliverer who banished from the nursery those huge and hateful mugs of misery—black founts of so many infantine tears—mugs of sobs and sighs and gasps and struggles unutterable, from one of which Madame Roland drew the first inspiration of that martyr spirit which led her onward to the guillotine, when she suffered herself to be whipped six times running, sooner than swallow the abominable contents.

and only the best signed poems and ballads need stand alongside of them, while others are to be left on one side and others used uncharitably by the compiler and author. Had there been such a collection prepared, and given to the world, it would have been of incalculable value to any student of English literature.

Hours in a Library.

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No. XI.—COWPER AND ROUSSEAU.

SAINTE-BEUVE's Essay on Cowper—considered as the type of domestic poets—has recently been translated for the benefit of English readers. It is interesting to know on the highest authority what are the qualities which may recommend a writer, so strongly tinged by local prejudices, to the admiration of a different race and generation. The gulf which separates the Olney of a century back from modern Paris is wide enough to give additional value to the generous appreciation of the critic. I have not the presumption to supplement or correct any part of his judgment. It is enough to remark briefly that Cowper's immediate popularity was, as is usually the case, due in part to qualities which have little to do with his more enduring reputation. Sainte-Beuve dwells with special fondness upon his pictures of domestic and rural life. He notices, of course, the marvellous keenness of his pathetic poems; and he touches, though with some hint that national affinity is necessary to its full appreciation, upon the playful humour which immortalised John Gilpin, and lights up the poet's most charming letters. Something, perhaps, might still be said by a competent critic upon the singular charm of Cowper's best style. A poet, for example, might perhaps tell us, though a prosaic person cannot, what is the secret of the impression made by such a poem as the "Wreck of the Royal George." Given an ordinary newspaper paragraph about wreck or battle, turn it into the simplest possible language, do not introduce a single metaphor or figure of speech, indulge in none but the most obvious of all reflections—as, for example, that when a man is once drowned he won't win any more battles—and produce as the result a copy of verses which nobody can ever read without instantly knowing them by heart. How Cowper managed to perform such a feat, and why not one poet even in a hundred can perform it, are questions which might lead to some curious critical speculation.

The qualities, however, which charm the purely literary critic do not account for the whole of Cowper's influence. A great part of his immediate, and some part of his more enduring success, have been clearly owing to a different cause. On reading Johnson's *Life*, Cowper remarked, rather uncharitably, that there was scarcely one good man amongst the poets. Few poets, indeed, shared those religious views which commended him more than any literary excellence to a large class of readers. Religious poetry is generally popular out of all proportion to its aesthetic merits. Young was but a second-rate Pope in point of talent; but probably the

Night Thoughts have been studied by a dozen people for one who has read the *Essay on Man* or the *Imitations of Horace*. In our own day, nobody, I suppose, would hold that the popularity of the *Christian Year* has been strictly proportioned to its poetical excellence; and Cowper's vein of religious meditation has recommended him to thousands who, if biased at all, were quite unconsciously biased by the admirable qualities which endeared him to such a critic as Sainte-Beuve. His own view was frequently and unequivocally expressed. He says over and over again—and his entire sincerity lifts him above all suspicion of the affected self-depreciation of other writers—that he looked upon his poetical work as at best innocent trifling, except so far as his poems were versified sermons. His intention was everywhere didactic—sometimes annoyingly didactic—and his highest ambition was to be a useful auxiliary to the prosaic exhortations of Doddridge, Watts, or his friend Newton. His religion, said some people, drove him mad. Even a generous critic like Mr. Stopford Brooke cannot refrain from hinting that his madness was in some part due to the detested influence of Calvinism. In fact, it may be admitted that Newton—who is half inclined to boast that he has a name for driving people mad—scarcely showed his judgment setting a man who had already been in confinement to write hymns which at times are the embodiment of despair. But it is obviously contrary to the plainest facts to say that Cowper was driven mad by his creed. His first attack preceded his religious enthusiasm; and a gentleman who tries to hang himself because he has received a comfortable appointment for life is in a state of mind which may be explained without reference to his theological views. It would be truer to say that when Cowper's intellect was once unhinged, he found a congenial expression for the tortures of his soul in the imagery provided by the sternest of Christian sects. But neither can this circumstance be alleged as in itself disparaging to the doctrines thus misapplied. A religious belief which does not provide language for the darkest moods of the human mind, for profound melancholy, torturing remorse and gloomy foreboding, is a religion not calculated to lay a powerful grasp upon the imaginations of mankind. Had Cowper been a Roman Catholic, the same anguish of mind might have driven him to seek relief in the recesses of some austere monastery. Had he, like Rousseau, been a theoretical optimist, he would, like Rousseau, have tortured himself with the conflict between theory and fact,—between the world as it might be and the corrupt and tyrannous world as it is—and have held that all men were in a conspiracy to rob him of his peace. The chief article of Rousseau's rather hazy creed was the duty of universal philanthropy, and Rousseau fancied himself to be the object of all men's hatred. Similarly, Cowper, who held that the first duty of man was the love of God, fancied that some mysterious cause had made him the object of the irrevocable hatred of his Creator. With such fancies, reason and creeds which embody reason have nothing to do except to give shape to the instruments of self-

nurture. The cause of the misery is the mind diseased. You can no more raze out its rooted troubles by arguing against the reality of the phantoms which it generates than cure any other delirium by the most irrefragable logic.

Sainte-Beuve makes some remarks upon this analogy between Rousseau and Cowper. The comparison suggests some curious considerations as to the contrast and likeness of the two cases represented. Some personal differences are, of course, profound and obvious. Cowper was as indisputably the most virtuous man, as Rousseau the greatest intellectual power. Cowper's domestic life was as beautiful as Rousseau's was repulsive. Rousseau, moreover, was more decidedly a sentimentalist than Cowper, if by sentimentalism we mean that disposition which makes a luxury of grief, and delights in pouring over its own morbid emotions. Cowper's tears are always wrung from him by intense anguish of soul, and never, as is occasionally the case with Rousseau, suggest that the weeper is proud of his excessive tenderness. Nevertheless, it is probably true, as Mr. Lowell says, that Cowper is the nearest congener of Rousseau in our language. The two men, of course, occupy in one respect an analogous literary position. We habitually assign to Cowper an important place—though of course a subordinate place to Rousseau—in bringing about the reaction against the eighteenth-century code of taste and morality. In each case it would generally be said that the change indicated was a return to nature and passion from the artificial coldness of the dominant school. That reaction, whatever its precise nature, took characteristically different forms in England and in France; and it is as illustrating one of the most important distinctions that I propose to say a few words upon the contrast thus exhibited.

Return to Nature! That was the war-cry which animated the Lake school in their assault upon the then established authority. Pope, as they held, had tied the hands of English poets by his jingling metres and frigid conventionalities. The muse—to make use of the old-fashioned phrase—had been rouged and bewigged, and put into high-heeled boots, till she had lost the old majestic freedom of gait and energy of action. Let us go back to our ancient school, to Milton and Shakspeare and Spenser and Chaucer, and break the ignoble fetters imported from the pseudo-classicists of France. These and similar phrases, repeated and varied in a thousand forms, have become part of the stock in trade of literary historians, and are put forward so fluently that we sometimes forget to ask what it is precisely that they mean. Down to Milton, it is assumed, we were natural; then we became artificial; and with the revolution we became natural again. That a theory so generally received and so consciously adopted by the leaders of the new movement must have in it a considerable amount of truth, is not to be disputed. But it is sometimes not easy to interpret it into very plain language. The method of explaining great intellectual and social movements by the phrase "reaction" is a very tempting one, for the simple reason that it enables

us to effect a great saving of thought. The change is made to explain itself. History becomes a record of oscillations ; we are always swinging backwards and forwards, pendulum-fashion, from one extreme to another. The courtiers of Charles II. were too dissolute because the Puritans were too strict ; Addison and Steele were respectable because Congreve and Wycherley were licentious ; Wesley was zealous because the Church had become indifferent ; the revolution of 1789 was a reaction against the manners of the last century, and the revolution in running its course set up a reaction against itself. Now it is easy enough to admit that there is some truth in this theory. Every great man who moves his race profoundly is of necessity protesting against the worst evils of the time, and it is as true as a copybook that zeal leads to extremes, and one extreme to its opposite. A river flowing through a nearly level plain turns its concavity alternately to the east and west, and we may fairly explain each bend by the fact that the previous bend was in the opposite direction. But that does not explain why the river flows down-hill, nor show which direction leads downwards. We may account for trifling oscillations, not for the main current. Nor does it seem at first a self-evident proposition that vice, for example, necessarily generates overstrictness. A man is not always a Pharisee because his father has been a sinner. In fact, the people who talk so fluently about reaction fall back whenever it suits them upon the inverse theory. If a process happens to be continuous, the reason is as simple and satisfactory as in the opposite case. A man is dissolute, they will tell us, because his father was dissolute ; just as they will tell us, in the opposite case, that he was dissolute because his father was strict. Obviously, the mere statement of a reaction is not by itself satisfactory. We want to know why there should have been a reaction ; why the code of morals which satisfied one generation did not satisfy its successors ; why the coming man was repelled rather than attracted ; what it was that made Pope array himself in a wig instead of appreciating the noble freedom of his predecessors ; and why, again, at a given period men became tired of the old wig business. When we have solved, or approximated to a solution of, that problem, we shall generally find, I suspect, that the action and reaction are generally more superficial phenomena than we suppose, and that the great processes of evolution are going on beneath the surface comparatively undisturbed by the changes which first attract our notice. Every man naturally exaggerates the share of his education due to himself. He fancies that he has made a wonderful improvement upon his father's views, perhaps by reversing the improvement made by the father on the grandfather's. He does not see, what is plain enough to a more distant generation, that in reality each generation is most closely bound to its nearest predecessors.

There is, too, a special source of ambiguity in the catchword used by the revolutionary school. They spoke of a return to nature. What, as Mr. Mill asked in his posthumous essay, is meant by nature ? Does it mean inanimate nature ? If so, is a love of nature clearly good or

"natural?" Was Wordsworth justifiable *prima facie* for telling us to study mountains rather than Pope for announcing that

The proper study of mankind is man?

Is it not more natural to be interested in men than in mountains? Does nature include man in his natural state? If so, what is the natural state of man? Is the savage the man of nature, or the unsophisticated peasant, or the man whose natural powers are developed to the highest pitch? Is a native of the Andaman Islands the superior of Socrates? If you admit that Socrates is superior to the savage, where do you draw the line between the natural and the artificial? If a coral reef is natural and beautiful because it is the work of insects, and a town artificial and ugly because made by man, we must reject as unnatural all the best products of the human race. If you distinguish between different works of man, the distinction becomes irrelevant, for the products to which we most object are just as natural, in any assignable sense of the word, as those which we most admire. The word natural may indeed be used as equivalent simply to beneficial or healthy; but then it loses all value as an implicit test of what is and what is not beneficial. Probably, indeed, some such sense was floating before the minds of most who have used the term. We shall generally find a vague recognition of the fact that there is a continuous series of integrating and disintegrating processes; that some changes imply a normal development of the social or individual organism leading to increased health and strength, whilst others are significant of disease and ultimate obliteration or decay of structure. Thus the artificial style of the Pope school, the appeals to the muse, the pastoral affectation, and so forth, may be called unnatural, because the philosophy of that style is the retention of obsolete symbols after all vitality has departed, and when they consequently become mere obstructions, embarrassing the free flow of emotion which they once stimulated.

But, however this may be, it is plain that the very different senses given to the word nature by different schools of thought were characteristic of profoundly different conceptions of the world and its order. There is a sense in which it may be said with perfect accuracy that the worship of nature, so far from being a fresh doctrine of the new school, was the most characteristic tenet of the school from which it dissented. All the speculative part of the English literature in the first half of the eighteenth century is a prolonged discussion as to the meaning and value of the law of nature, the religion of nature, and the state of nature. The deist controversy, which occupied every one of the keenest thinkers of the time, turned essentially upon this problem: granting that there is an ascertainable and absolutely true religion of nature, what is its relation to revealed religion? That, for example, is the question explicitly discussed in Butler's typical book, which gives the pith of the whole orthodox argument, and the same speculation suggested the theme of Pope's *Essay on Man*, which, in its occasional strength and its many weaknesses, is perhaps the most characteristic, though far from the most valuable,

product of the time. The religion of nature undoubtedly meant something very different with Butler or Pope from what it would have meant with Wordsworth or Coleridge, something so different, indeed, that we might at first say that the two creeds had nothing in common but the name. But we may see from Rousseau that there was a real and intimate connection. Rousseau's philosophy, in fact, is taken bodily from the teaching of his English predecessors. His celebrated profession of faith through the lips of the Vicaire Savoyard, which delighted Voltaire and profoundly influenced the leaders of the French Revolution, is in fact the expression of a deism identical with that of Pope's essay.* The political theories of the Social Contract are founded upon the same base which served Locke and the English political theorists of 1688; and are applied to sanction the attempt to remodel existing societies in accordance with what they would have called the law of nature. It is again perfectly true that Rousseau drew from his theory consequences which inspired Robespierre, and would have made Locke's hair stand on end; and that Pope would have been scandalised at the too open revelation of his religious tendencies. It is also true that Rousseau's passion was of infinitely greater importance than his philosophy. But it remains true that the logical framework into which his theories were fitted came to him straight from the same school of thought which was dominant in England during the preceding period. The real change effected by Rousseau was that he breathed life into the dead bones. The English theorists, as has been admirably shown by Mr. Morley in his *Rousseau*, acted after their national method. They accepted doctrines which, if logically developed, would have led to a radical revolution, and therefore refused to develop them logically. They remained in their favourite attitude of compromise, and declined altogether to accommodate practice to theory. Locke's political principles fairly carried out implied universal suffrage, the absolute supremacy of the popular will, and the abolition of class privileges. And yet it never seems to have occurred to him that he was even indirectly attacking that complex structure of the British Constitution, rooted in history, marked in every detail by special conditions of growth, and therefore anomalous to the last degree when tried by *a priori* reasoning, of which Burke's philosophical eloquence gives the best explanation and apology. Similarly, Clarke's theology is pure deism, embodied in a series of propositions worked out on the model of a mathematical text-book, and yet in his eyes perfectly consistent with an acceptance of the orthodox dogmas which repose upon traditional authority. This attitude of mind, so intelligible on this side of the Channel, was utterly abhorrent to Rousseau's logical instincts. Englishmen were content to keep their abstract theories for the closet or the lecture-room, and dropped them as soon as they were in the pulpit or in

* Rousseau himself seems to refer to Clarke, the leader of the English rationalising school, as the best exponent of his theory, and defended Pope's Essay against the criticisms of Voltaire.

Parliament. Rousseau could give no quarter to any doctrine which could not be fitted into a symmetrical edifice of abstract reasoning. He carried into actual warfare the weapons which his English teachers had kept for purposes of mere scholastic disputation. A monarchy, an order of privileged nobility, a hierarchy claiming supernatural authority, were not logically justifiable on the accepted principles. Never mind, was the English answer, they work very well in practice; let us leave them alone. Down with them to the ground! was Rousseau's passionate retort. Realise the ideal; force practice into conformity with theory; the voice of the poor and the oppressed is crying aloud for vengeance; the divergence of the actual from the theoretical is no mere trifle to be left to the slow action of time; it means the misery of millions and the corruption of their rulers. The doctrine which had amused philosophers was to become the war-cry of the masses; the men of '89 were at no loss to translate into precepts suited for the immediate wants of the day the doctrines which found their first utterance in the glow of his voluminous eloquence; and the fall of the Bastille showed the first vibrations of the earthquake which is still shaking the soil of Europe.

It is easy, then, to give a logical meaning to Rousseau's return to nature. The whole inanimate world, so ran his philosophy, is perfect and shows plainly the marks of the Divine workmanship. All evil really comes from man's abuse of freewill. Mountains, and forests, and seas, all objects which have not suffered from his polluting touch, are perfect and admirable. Let us fall down and worship. Man, too, himself, as he came from his Creator's hands, is perfect. His "natural"—that is, original—impulses are all good; and in all men, in all races and regions of the earth, we find a conscience which unerringly distinguishes good from evil, and a love of his fellows which causes man to obey the dictates of his conscience. And yet the world, as we see it, is a prison or a lazarus-house. Disease and starvation make life a burden, and poison the health of the coming generations; those whom fortune has placed above the masses make use of their advantages to harden their hearts, and extract means of selfish enjoyment from the sufferings of their fellow-creatures. What is the source of this heart-rending discord? The abuse of men's freewill; that is, of the mysterious power which enables us to act contrary to the dictates of nature. What is the best name for the disease which it generates? Luxury and corruption—the two cant objects of denunciations which were as popular in the pre-revolutionary generation as attacks upon sensationalism and over-excitement at the present day. And what, then, is the mode of cure? The return to nature. We are to make history run backwards, to raze to its foundations the whole social and intellectual structure that has been erected by generations of corrupt and selfish men. Everything by which the civilised man differs from some theoretical pretension is tainted with a kind of original sin. Political institutions, as they exist, are conveniences for enabling the rich to rob the poor, and churches contrivances by which priests make igno-

rance and superstition play into the hands of selfish authority. Level all the existing order, and build up a new one on principles of pure reason ; give up all the philosophical and theological dogmas, which have been the work of designing priests and bewildered speculators, and revert to that pure and simple religion which is divinely implanted in the heart of every uncorrupted human being. The Savoyard vicar, if you have any doubts, will tell you what is the true creed ; and if you don't believe it, is Rousseau's rather startling corollary, you ought to be put to death.

That final touch shows the arbitrary and despotic spirit characteristic of the relentless theorist. I need not here enquire what relation may be borne by Rousseau's theories to any which could now be accepted by intelligent thinkers. It is enough to say that there would be, to put it gently, some slight difficulty in settling the details of this pure creed, common to all unsophisticated minds, and in seeing what would be left when we had destroyed all institutions alloyed by sin and selfishness. The meaning, however, in this connection of his love of nature, taking the words in their mere common sense, is in harmony with his system. The mountains, whose worship he was the first to adumbrate, if not actually to institute, were the symbols of the great natural forces free from any stain of human interference. Greed and cruelty had not stained the pure waters of his lovely lake, or dimmed the light to which his vicar points as in the early morning it grazes the edges of the mighty mountain ridges. Whatever symbolism may be found in the Alps, suggesting emotions of awe, wonder, and softened melancholy, came unstained by the association with the vices of a complex civilisation. If poets and critics have not quite analysed the precise nature of our modern love of mountain scenery, the sentiment may at least be illustrated by a modern parallel. The most eloquent writer who, in our day, has transferred to his pages the charm of Alpine beauties shares in many ways Rousseau's antipathy for the social order. Mr. Ruskin would explain better than anyone why the love of the sublimest scenery should be associated with a profound conviction that all things are out of joint, and that society can only be regenerated by rejecting all the achievements upon which the ordinary optimist plumes himself. After all, it is not surprising that those who are most sick of man as he is should love the regions where man seems smallest. When Swift wished to express his disgust for his race, he showed how absurd our passions appear in a creature six inches high ; and the mountains make us all Lilliputians. In other mouths Rousseau's sentiment, more fully interpreted, became unequivocally misanthropical. Byron, if any definite logical theory were to be fixed upon him, excluded the human race at large from his conception of nature. He loved, or talked as though he loved, the wilderness precisely because it was a wilderness ; the sea because it sent men "shivering to their gods," and the mountains because their avalanches crush the petty works of human industry. Rousseau was less antisocial than his disciple. The mountains, with him, were the great barriers which kept civilisation and all its horrors

at bay. They were the asylums for liberty and simplicity. There the peasant, unspoilt as yet by *trinkgelds*, not oppressed by the great, nor corrupted by the rich, could lead that idyllic life upon which his fancy delighted. In a passage quoted, as *Sainte-Beuve* notices, by Cowper, Rousseau describes, with his usual warmth of sentiment, the delightful *matinée anglaise* passed in sight of the Alps by the family which had learnt the charms of simplicity, and regulated its manners and the education of its children by the unsophisticated laws of nature. It is doubtless a charming picture, though the virtuous persons concerned are a little over-conscious of their virtue, and it indicates a point of coincidence between the two men. Rousseau, as Mr. Morley says, could appreciate as well as Cowper the charms of a simple and natural life. Nobody could be more eloquent on the beauty of domesticity; no one could paint better the happiness of family life, where the main occupation was the primitive labour of cultivating the ground, where no breath of unhallowed excitement penetrated from the restless turmoil of the outside world, where the mother knew her place, and kept to her placid round of womanly duties, and where the children were taught with a gentle firmness which developed every germ of reason and affection, without undue stimulus or undue repression. And yet one must doubt whether Cowper would have felt himself quite at ease in the family of the Wolmars. The circle which gathered round the hearth at Olney to listen for the horn of the approaching postman, and solaced itself with cups "that cheer but not inebriate,"* would have been a little scandalised by some of the sentiments current in the *Vaudois* paradise, and certainly by some of the antecedents of the party assembled. Cowper's "Mary," and even their more fashionable friend, Lady Austen, would have felt their respectable prejudices shocked by contact with the new *Heloise*; and the views of life taken by their teacher, the converted slaveholder, John Newton, were as opposite as possible to those of Rousseau's imaginary vicar. Indeed, Rousseau's ideal families have that stain of affectation from which Cowper is so conspicuously free. The rose-colour is laid on too thickly. They are too fond of taking credit for universal admiration of the fine feelings which invariably animate their breasts; their charitable sentiments are apt to take the form of very easy condonation of vice; and if they repudiate the world, we cannot believe that they are really unconscious of its existence. Perhaps this dash of self-consciousness was useful in recommending them to the taste of the jaded and weary society, sickening of a strange disease which it could not interpret to itself, and finding for the moment a new excitement in the charms of ancient simplicity. The real thing might have palled upon it. But Rousseau's artificial and self-conscious simplicity expressed that vague yearning and spirit of unrest which could generate a half-sensual sentimentalism but could be repelled by genuine sentiment.

* A phrase, by the way, which Cowper, though little given to borrowing, took straight from Berkeley's *Siris*.

Perhaps it not uncommonly happens that those who are more or less tainted with a morbid tendency can denounce it most effectually. The most effective satirist is the man who has escaped with labour and pains, and not without some grievous stains, from the slough in which others are still mired. The perfectly pure has sometimes too little sympathy with his weaker brethren to place himself at their point of view. Indeed, as we shall have occasion to remark, Cowper is an instance of a thinker too far apart from the great world to apply the lash effectually.

Rousseau's view of the world and its evils was thus coherent enough, however unsatisfactory in its basis, and was a development of, not a reaction against, the previously dominant philosophy; and, though using a different dialect and confined by different conditions, Cowper's attack upon the existing order harmonizes with much of Rousseau's language. The first volume of poems, in which he had not yet discovered the secret of his own strength, is in form a continuation of the satires of the Pope school, and in substance a religious version of Rousseau's denunciations of luxury. Amongst the first symptoms of the growing feeling of uneasy discontent had been the popularity of Brown's now-forgotten "Estimate."

The inestimable estimate of Brown
Rose like a paper kite, and charmed the town,

says Cowper; and he proceeds to show that though Chatham's victorious administration had for a moment restored the self-respect of the country, the evils denounced by Brown were symptoms of a profound and lasting disease. The poems called the "Progress of Error," "Expostulation," "Truth," "Hope," "Charity," and "Conversation," all turn upon the same theme. Though Cowper is for brief spaces playful or simply satirical, he always falls back into his habitual vein of meditation. For the ferocious personalities of Churchill, the coarse-fibred friend of his youth, we have a sad strain of lamentation over the growing luxury and effeminacy of the age. It is a continued anticipation of the lines in the *Task*, which seem to express his most serious and sincere conviction.

The course of human ills, from good to ill,
From ill to worse, is fatal, never fails.
Increase of power begets increase of wealth,
Wealth luxury, and luxury excess :
Excess the scrophulous and itchy plague,
That seizes first the opulent, descends
To the next rank contagious, and in time
Taints downwards all the graduated scale
Of order, from the chariot to the plough.

That is his one unvariable lesson, set in different lights but associated more or less closely with every observation. The world is ripening or rotting; and, as with Rousseau, luxury is the most significant name of the absorbing evil. That such a view should commend itself to a mind so clouded with melancholy would not be at any time surprising, but it fell in with a widely spread conviction. Cowper had not, indeed, learnt the most effective mode of touching men's hearts. Separated by a retirement

of twenty years from the world, with which he had never been very familiar, and at which he only "peeped through the loopholes of retreat," his satire wanted the brilliance, the quickness of illustration from actual life, which alone makes satire readable. His tone of feeling too frequently suggests that the critic represents the querulous comments of old ladies gossiping about the outside world over their tea cups, easily scandalised by very simple things. Mrs. Unwin was an excellent old lady, and Newton a most zealous country clergyman. Probably they were intrinsically superior to the fine ladies and gentlemen who laughed at them. But a mind acclimatised to the atmosphere which they breathed inevitably lost its nervous tone. There was true masculine vigour underlying Cowper's jeremiads; but it was natural that many people should only see in him an amiable valetudinarian, not qualified for a censorship of statesmen and men of the world. The man who fights his way through London streets can't stop to lament over every splash and puddle which might shock poor Cowper's nervous sensibility.

The last poem of the series, however, *Retirement*, showed that Cowper had a more characteristic and solacing message to mankind than a mere rehearsal of the threadbare denunciations of luxury. The *Task* revealed his genuine power. There appeared those admirable delineations of country scenery and country thoughts which Sainte-Beuve detaches so lovingly from the mass of serious speculation in which they are embedded. What he, as a purely literary critic, passed over as comparatively uninteresting gives the exposition of Cowper's intellectual position. The poem is in fact a political moral and religious disquisition interspersed with charming vignettes, which, though not obtrusively moralised, illustrate the general thesis. The poetical connoisseur may separate them from their environment, as a collector of engravings might cut out the illustrations from the now worthless letterpress. The poor author might complain that the most important moral was thus eliminated from his book. But the author is dead, and his opinions don't much matter. To understand Cowper's mind, however, we must take the now obsolete meditation with the permanently attractive pictures. To know why he so tenderly loved the slow windings of the sinuous Ouse, we must see what he thought of the great Babel beyond. It is the distant murmur of the great city that makes his little refuge so attractive. The general vein of thought which appears in every book of the poem is most characteristically expressed in the fifth, called "A Winter Morning Walk." Cowper strolls out at sunrise in his usual mood of tender playfulness, smiles at the vast shadow cast by the low winter sun, as he sees upon the cottage wall the

Preposterous sight! the legs without the man.

He remarks, with a passing recollection of his last sermon, that we are all shadows; but turns to note the cattle cowering behind the fences; the labourer carving the haystack; the woodman, going to work, followed by his half-bred cur, and cheered by the fragrance of his short pipe.

He watches the marauding sparrows, and thinks with tenderness of the fate of less audacious birds; and then pauses to examine the strange fretwork erected at the milldam by the capricious freaks of the frost. Art, it suggests to him, is often beaten by Nature; and his fancy goes off to the winter palace of ice erected by the Russian empress. His friend Newton makes use of the same easily allegorised object in one of his religious writings; though I know not whether the poet or the divine first turned it to account. Cowper, at any rate, is immediately diverted into a meditation on "human grandeur and the courts of kings." The selfishness and folly of the great give him an obvious theme for a dissertation in the true Rousseau style. He tells us how "kings were first invented"—the ordinary theory of the time being that political—deists added religious— institutions were all somehow "invented" by knaves to impose upon fools. "War is a game," he says, in the familiar phrase,

Which were their subjects wise

King* would not play at.

But, unluckily, their subjects are fools. In England, indeed—for Cowper, by virtue of his family traditions, was in theory a sound Whig—we know how far to trust our kings; and he rises into a warmth on behalf of liberty for which he thinks it right to make a simple-minded apology in a note. The sentiment suggests a vigorous and "indeed prophetic denunciation of the terrors of the Bastille, and its "horrid towers and dungeons."

There's not an English heart that would not leap

To hear that ye were fallen at last !

Within five or six years English hearts were indeed welcoming the event thus foretold as the prospects of a new era of liberty. Liberty, says Cowper, is the one thing which makes England dear. Were that boon lost,

I would at least bewail it under skies

Milder, amongst a people less austere :

In scenes which, having never known me free,

Would not reproach me with the loss I felt.*

So far Cowper was but expressing the sentiments of Rousseau, omitting, of course, Rousseau's hearty dislike for England. But liberty suggests to Cowper a different and more solemn vein of thought. There are worse dungeons, he remembers, than the Bastille, and a slavery compared with which that of the victims of French tyranny is a trifle—

There is yet a liberty unsung

By poets, and by senators unpraised,

Which monarchs cannot grant, nor all the power

Of earth and hell confederate take away.

* Mr. Tennyson suggests the same consolation in the lines ending—

Yet waft me from the harbour-mouth,

Wild winds, I seek a warmer sky ;

And I will see before I die

The palms and temples of the South.

The patriot is lower than the martyr, though more highly prized by the world ; and Cowper changes his strain of patriotic fervour into a prolonged devotional comment upon the text

He is the freeman whom the truth makes free,
And all are slaves besides.

Who would have thought that we could glide so easily into so solemn a topic from looking at the quaint freaks of morning shadows ? But the charm of the *Task* is its sincerity ; and in Cowper's mind the most trivial objects really are connected by subtle threads of association with the most solemn thoughts. He begins with mock heroics on the sofa, and ends with a glowing vision of the millenium. No dream of human perfectibility, but the expected advent of the true Ruler of the earth is the relief to the palpable darkness of the existing world. The "Winter Walk" traces the circle of thought through which his mind invariably revolves.

It would be a waste of labour to draw out in definite formula the systems adopted, from emotional sympathy, rather than from any logical speculation, by Cowper and Rousseau. Each in some degree owed his power—though Rousseau in a far higher degree than Cowper—to his profound sensitiveness to the heavy burden of the time. Each of them felt like a personal grief, and exaggerated in a distempered imagination, the weariness and the forebodings more dimly present to contemporaries. In an age when old forms of government had grown rigid and obsolete, when the stiffened crust of society was beginning to heave with new throes, when ancient faiths had left mere husks of dead formulæ to cramp the minds of men, when even superficial observers were startled by vague omens of a coming crash or expected some melodramatic regeneration of the world, it was perhaps not strange that two men, tottering on the verge of madness, should be amongst the most impressive prophets. The truth of Butler's speculation that nations, like individuals, might go mad was about to receive an apparent confirmation. Cowper, like Rousseau, might see the world through the distorting haze of a disordered fancy, but the world at large was strangely disordered, and the smouldering discontent of the inarticulate masses found an echo in their passionate utterances. Their voices were like the moan of a coming earthquake.

The difference, however, so characteristic of the two countries, is reflected by the national representatives. Nobody could be less of a revolutionist than Cowper. His whiggism was little more than a tradition. Though he felt bound to denounce kings, to talk about Hampden and Sidney, and to sympathise with Mrs. Macaulay's old-fashioned republicanism, there was not a more loyal subject of George III., or one more disposed, when he could turn his mind from his pet hares to the concerns of the empire, to lament the revolt of the American colonies. The awakening of England from the pleasant slumbers of the eighteenth century—for it seems pleasant in these more restless times—took place in a curiously sporadic and heterogeneous fashion. In France the spiritual and temporal were so intricately welded together, the interests of the

State were so deeply involved in maintaining the faith of the Church, that conservatism and orthodoxy naturally went together. Philosophers rejected with equal fervour the established religious and the political creed. The new volume of passionate feeling, no longer satisfied with the ancient barriers, poured itself in both cases into the revolutionary channel. In England no such plain and simple issue existed. We had our usual system of compromises in practice, and hybrid combinations of theory. There were infidel conservatives and radical believers. The man who more than any other influenced English history during that century was John Wesley. Wesley was to the full as deeply impressed as Rousseau with the moral and social evils of the time. We may doubt whether Cowper's denunciations of luxury owed most to Rousseau's sentimental eloquence or to the matter-of-fact vigour of Wesley's "Appeals." Cowper's portrait of Whitfield—"Leuconomus," as he calls him, to evade the sneers of the cultivated—and his frequent references to the despised sect of Methodists, reveal the immediate source of much of his indignation. So far as those evils were caused by the intellectual and moral conditions common to Europe at large, Wesley and Rousseau might be called allies. Both of them gave satisfaction to the need for a free play of unsatisfied emotions. Their solutions of the problem were of course radically different; and Cowper only speaks the familiar language of his sect when he taunts the philosopher with his incapacity to free man from his bondage :

Spend all the powers
Of rant and rhapsody in virtue's praise,
Be most sublimely good, verhosely grand,
And with poetic trappings grace thy prose
Till it outmantle all the pride of verse ;

where he was perhaps, as Sainte-Beuve suggests, thinking of Rousseau, though Shaftesbury was the more frequent butt of such denunciations. The difference in the solution of the great problem of moral regeneration was facilitated by the difference of the environment. Rousseau, though he shows a sentimental tenderness for Christianity, could not be orthodox without putting himself on the side of the oppressors. Wesley, though feeling profoundly the social discords of the time, could take the side of the poor without the need of breaking in pieces a rigid system of class-privilege. The evil which he had to encounter did not present itself as tyranny oppressing helplessness, but as a general neglect of reciprocal duties verging upon license. On the whole, therefore, he took the conservative side of political questions. When the American war gave the first signal of coming troubles, the combinations of opinion were significant of the general state of mind. Wesley and Johnson denounced the rebels from the orthodox point of view with curious coincidence of language. The only man of equal intellectual calibre who took the same side unequivocally was the arch-infidel Gibbon. The then sleepy Established Church was too tolerant or too indifferent to trouble him: why should he ally

himself with Puritans and enthusiasts to attack the Government which at once supported and tied its hands ? On the other side, we find such lovers of the established religious order as Burke associated with free-thinkers like Tom Paine and Horne Tooke. Tooke might agree with Voltaire in private, but he could not air his opinions to a party which relied in no small measure on the political zeal of sound dissenters. Dissent, in fact, meant something like atheism combined with radicalism in France ; in England it meant desire for the traditional liberties of Englishmen, combined with an often fanatical theological creed.

Cowper, brought up amidst such surroundings, had no temptation to adopt Rousseau's sweeping revolutionary fervour. His nominal whiggism was not warmed into any subversive tendency. The labourers with whose sorrows he sympathised might be ignorant, coarse, and drunken ; he saw their faults too clearly to believe in Rousseau's idyllic conventionalities, and painted the truth as realistically as Crabbe : they required to be kept out of the public house, not to be liberated from obsolete feudal disqualifications ; a poacher, such as he described, was not the victim of a brutal aristocracy, but simply a commonplace variety of thief. And, on the other hand, when he denounced the laziness and selfishness of the Establishment, the luxurious bishops, the sycophantic curates, the sporting and the fiddling and the cardplaying parson, he has no thought of the enmity to Christianity which such satire would have suggested to a French reformer, but is mentally contrasting the sleepiness of the bishops with the virtues of Newton or Whitfield.

"Where dwell these matchless saints ?" old Curio cries.

"Even at your side, sir, and before your eyes,

The favour'd few, the enthusiasts you despise."

And, whatever be thought of Cowper's general estimate of the needs of his race, it must be granted that in one respect his philosophy was more consequent than Rousseau's. Rousseau, though a deist in theory, rejected the deist conclusion, that whatever is, is right ; and consequently the problem of how it can be that men, who are naturally so good, are in fact so vile, remained a difficulty, only slurred over by his fluent metaphysics about free will. Cowper's belief in the profound corruption of human nature supplied him with a doctrine less at variance with his view of facts. He has no illusions about the man of nature. The savage, he tells us, was a drunken beast till rescued from his bondage by the zeal of the Moravian missionaries ; and the poor are to be envied, not because their lives are actually much better, but because they escape the temptations and sophistries of the rich and learned.

But how should this sentiment fit in with Cowper's love of nature ? In the language of his sect nature is generally opposed to grace. It is applied to a world in which not only the human inhabitants, but the whole creation is tainted with a mysterious evil. Why should Cowper find relief in contemplating a system in which waste and carnage play so conspicuous a part ? Why, when he rescued his pet hares from the general

fate of their race, did he not think of the innumerable hares who suffered not only from guns and greyhounds, but from the general annoyances incident to the struggle for existence? Would it not have been more logical if he had placed his happiness altogether in another world, where the struggles and torments of our everyday life are unknown? Indeed, though Cowper, as an orthodox Protestant, held that ascetic practices ministered simply to spiritual conceit, was he not bound to a sufficiently galling form of asceticism? His friends habitually looked askance upon all those pleasures of the intellect and the imagination which are not directly subservient to the religious emotions. They had grave doubts of the expediency of his studies of the pagan Homer. They looked with suspicion upon the slightest indulgence in social amusements. And Cowper fully shared their sentiments. A taste for music, for example, generally suggests to him a parson fiddling when he ought to be praying; and he, again following the lead of Newton, remarks upon the Handel celebration as a piece of grotesque profanity. The name of science calls up to him a pert geologist, declaring after an examination of the earth

That He who made it, and revealed its date
To Moses, was mistaken in its age.

Not only is the great bulk of his poetry directly religious or devotional, but on publishing the *Task* he assures Newton that he has admitted none but Scriptural images, and kept as closely as possible to Scriptural language. Elsewhere he quotes Swift's motto, *vive la bagatelle*, as a justification of "John Gilpin." Fox is recorded to have said that Swift must have been fundamentally a good-natured man because he wrote so much nonsense. To me the explanation seems to be very different. Nothing is more melancholy than Swift's elaborate triflings, because they represent the efforts of a powerful intellect passing into madness under enforced inaction, to kill time by childish occupation. And the diagnosis of Cowper's case is similar. He trifles, he says, because he is reduced to it by necessity. His most ludicrous verses have been written in his saddest mood. It would be, he adds, "but a shocking vagary" if the sailors on a ship in danger relieved themselves "by fiddling and dancing; yet sometimes much such a part act I." His love of country sights and pleasures is so intense because it is the most effectual relief. "Oh!" he exclaims, "I could spend whole days and nights in gazing upon a lovely prospect! My eyes drink the rivers as they flow." And he adds, with his characteristic tone of thought, "if every human being upon earth could feel as I have done for many years, there might perhaps be many miserable men among them, but not an unawakened one could be found from the Arctic to the Antarctic circle." The earth and the sun itself are, he says, but "baubles;" but they are baubles which alone can distract his attention from more awful prospects. His little garden and greenhouse are playthings lent to him for a time, and soon to be left. He "never framed a wish or formed a plan," as he says in the *Task*, of which the scene was not laid in the country; and when the gloomiest forebodings unhinged his mind, his love became a

passion. He is like his own prisoner in the Bastille playing with spiders. All other avenues of delight are closed to him; he believes, whenever his dark hour of serious thought returns, that he is soon to be carried off to unspeakable torments; all ordinary methods of human pleasure seem to be tainted with some corrupting influence; but whilst playing with his spaniel or watching his cucumbers, or walking with Mrs. Unwin in the fields, he can for a moment distract his mind with purely innocent pleasures. The awful background of his visions, never quite absent, though often, we may hope, far removed from actual consciousness, throws out these hours of delight into more prominent relief. The sternest of his monitors, John Newton himself, could hardly grudge this cup of cold water presented, as it were, to the lips of a man in a self-made purgatory.

This is the peculiar turn which gives so characteristic a tone to Cowper's loving portraits of scenery. He is like the Judas seen by St. Brandon on the iceberg; he is enjoying a momentary relaxation between the past of misery and the future of anticipated torment. Such a sentiment must, fortunately, be in some sense exceptional and idiosyncratic. And yet, as we have seen, it fell in with the prevailing current of thought. Cowper agrees with Rousseau in finding that the contemplation of scenery, unpolluted by human passion, and the enjoyment of a calm domestic life, is the best anodyne for a spirit wearied with the perpetual disorders of a corrupt social order. He differs from him, as we have seen, in the conviction that a deeper remedy is wanting than any mere political change; in a more profound sense of human wickedness, and, on the other hand, in a narrower estimate of the conditions of human life. His definition of Nature, to put it logically, would exclude that natural man in whose potential existence Rousseau theoretically believed. The passionate love of scenery was enough to distinguish him from the poets of the preceding school, whose supposed hatred of Nature meant simply that they were thoroughly immersed in the pleasures of a society then first developed in its modern form, and not yet undermined by the approach of a new revolution. The men of Pope and Addison's time looked upon country squires as bores incapable of intellectual pleasure, and, therefore, upon country life as a topic for gentle ridicule, or more frequently as an unmitigated nuisance. Probably their estimate was a very sound one. When a true poet like Thomson really enjoyed the fresh air, his taste did not become a passion, and the scenery appeared to him as a pleasant background to his Castle of Indolence. Cowper's peculiar religious views prevented him again from anticipating the wider and more philosophical sentiment of Wordsworth. Like Pope and Wordsworth, indeed, he occasionally uses language which has a pantheistic sound. He expresses his belief that *There lives and works a wondrous soul in all things, and that soul is God.* But when Pope uses a similar phrase, it is the expression of a distant philosophy which never had much vitality, or passed from the sphere of intellectual speculation to affect the imagination and the emotions. It is

a dogma which he holds sincerely, it may be, but not firmly enough to colour his habitual sentiments. With Wordsworth, whatever its precise meaning, it is an expression of an habitual and abiding sentiment, which rises naturally to his lips whenever he abandons himself to his spontaneous impulses. With Cowper, as is the case with all Cowper's utterances, it is absolutely sincere for the time; but it is a doctrine not very easily adapted to his habitual creed, and which drops out of his mind whenever he passes from external nature to himself or his fellows. The indwelling divinity whom he recognises in every "freckle, streak, or stain" on his favourite flowers seems to be hopelessly removed from his own personal interests. An awful and mysterious decree has separated him for ever from the sole source of consolation.

This is not the place to hint at any judgment upon Cowper's theology, or to enquire how far a love of nature, in his sense of the words, can be logically combined with a system based upon the fundamental dogma of the corruption of man. Certainly a similar anticipation of the poetical pantheism of Wordsworth may be found in that most logical of Calvinists, Jonathan Edwards. Cowper, too, could be at no loss for scriptural precedents, when recognising the immediate voice of God in thunder and earthquakes, or in the calmer voices of the waterbrooks and the meadows. His love of nature, at any rate, is at once of a narrower and sincerer kind than that which Rousseau first made fashionable. He has no tendency to the misanthropic or cynical view which induces men of morbid or affected minds to profess a love of savage scenery simply because it is savage. Neither does he rise to the more philosophical view which sees in the seas and the mountains the most striking symbols of the great forces of the universe to which we must accommodate ourselves, and which might therefore rightfully be associated by a Wordsworth with the deepest emotions of reverential awe. Nature is to him but a collection of "baubles," soon to be taken away, and he seeks in its contemplation a temporary relief from anguish, not a permanent object of worship. He would dread that sentiment as a deistical form of idolatry; and he is equally far from thinking that the natural man, wherever that vague person might be found, could possibly be a desirable object of imitation. His love of nature, in short, keen as it might be, was not the reflection of any philosophical, religious, or political theory. But it was genuine enough to charm many who might regard his theological sentiments as a mere recrudescence of an obsolete form of belief. Mr. Mill tells us how Wordsworth's poetry, little as he sympathised with Wordsworth's opinions, solaced an intellect wearied with premature Greek and over-doses of Benthamism. Such a relief must have come to many readers of Cowper, who would put down his religion as rank fanaticism, and his satire as anile declamation. Men suffered even then—though Cowper was a predecessor of Miss Austen—from existing forms of "life at high pressure." If life was not then so overcrowded, the evils under which men were suffering appeared to be even more hopeless. The great lesson of the

value of intervals of calm retreat, of silence and meditation, was already needed, if it is now still more pressing. Cowper said, substantially, Leave the world, as Rousseau said, Upset the world. The reformer, to say nothing of his greater intellectual power, naturally interested the world which he threatened more than the recluse whom it frightened. Limited within a narrower circle of ideas, and living in a society where the great issues of the time were not presented in so naked a form, Cowper's influence ran in a more confined channel. He felt the incapacity of the old order to satisfy the emotional wants of mankind, but was content to revive the old forms of belief instead of seeking a more radical remedy in some subversive or reconstructive system of thought. But the depth and sincerity of feeling which explains his marvellous censorial pathos, is sometimes a pleasant relief to the sentimentalism of his greater predecessor. Nor is it hard to understand why his passages of sweet and melancholy musing by the quiet Ouse should have come like a breath of fresh air to the jaded generation waiting for the fall of the Bastille—and of other things.

therefore now sufficient has come to justify me to speak in order
to illustrate this view. — referring now to the report of the Commission
on the question of the best way of raising money for scientific
research. — **Money for Science.** —

ABOUT four years ago a Commission was appointed, with the Duke of Devonshire as Chairman, to enquire into the methods available for extending scientific knowledge and advancing scientific progress. The eighth and final report of this Commission has just been published, so that we now have before us the results of all the enquiries made by the Commission. It will of course be understood that the reports of the Commission do not represent scientific opinion generally—only the opinion of the Commission (sometimes of a majority only of its members) upon such evidence as was brought before them. The evidence itself was frequently conflicting, and, as usual in such cases, many circumstances affected the selection of evidence, certain views being favoured, though of course not always to the actual exclusion of others. Into points such as these, however, we shall enquire further on. But the general subject dealt with by the Commission is one yearly growing in popular interest, and some of the special results to which the Commission have been led are well worth careful consideration.

The first seven reports of the Commission related to scientific instruction, and included an interesting survey of the various institutions, endowed or unendowed, intended to aid scientific study. Perhaps the only point in all those reports which would be of interest to the general reader is the suggestion that the cost of scientific researches on a wide scale might be defrayed either wholly or in great part by the universities, from sums bequeathed to them in old times. The Commission cited evidence to show that the universities were not originally founded, as most persons imagine, for educational purposes, but for the advancement of knowledge. "The collegiate foundations of the universities," said one witness, "were originally and fundamentally, though not absolutely and entirely, destined for that object." And the report proceeds to say, justly enough, "This object is certainly not less important in modern than [it was] in ancient society. In the middle ages, knowledge would altogether have perished if it had not been for such foundations, and it appears that now, from other causes, the pursuit of knowledge and of general scientific investigation is subject to very real dangers, though of another kind than those which then prevailed, and which make it very desirable to preserve any institution through which scientific discovery and the investigation of truth may be promoted."

But it is in the last report that the question of obtaining large sums of money for promoting scientific research is first definitely entered upon. In fact, this last report may be regarded as an appeal to the Government

for a goodly slice of the national funds. At present, about three hundred thousand pounds are expended annually by the nation on various scientific establishments. It is probable that if all the suggestions of the Royal Commission were carried out, the annual Government expenditure would rise to about ten times its present amount, and involve a very appreciable increase of taxation. So that we are all directly interested in the views the Commission have propounded. If these views are sound, and the proposed outlay would really be a most profitable investment, then the nation would gain an appreciable advantage by adopting the suggestions of the Commission; but if otherwise, the nation would suffer loss apart from certain mischievous consequences not to be estimated by a pecuniary standard. If, as is more probable than either of these extreme views, the suggestions of the Commission are partly sound and partly questionable, it will be a matter well worth careful attention to divide these suggestions into their proper categories.

We may divide into three classes the objects to which it is proposed that Government should give assistance,—First, scientific researches by which the nation would, or might, gain some material advantage; secondly, scientific researches of philosophic interest only; and thirdly, the support of scientific workers, both by grants beyond the expenditure actually incurred in their investigations, and by the creation of well-salaried offices. The third of these divisions is, however, manifestly associated in some degree with the second.

Respecting scientific researches tending to advance the material interests of the nation, there will probably be little difference of opinion. Already such researches have been carried out at considerable yearly expense, and so far with advantage as to suggest that more money might well be devoted to them. There is an annual charge for the topographical survey of Great Britain, under control of the Treasury; another for the hydrological survey conducted by the Admiralty. The observatories at Greenwich and the Cape of Good Hope are under Admiralty control, while the Treasury maintains the observatories at Edinburgh and Dublin, and the botanical gardens at Kew, Dublin, and Edinburgh. The standard department under the Board of Trade, and the chemical department under the War Office, involve a considerable annual expenditure. A sum of 10,000*l.* is annually voted also for meteorological observations.

Most of these departments of national scientific research (so to call them) would certainly seem to require increased grants. To take the meteorological observations alone. The Commission in their last report express the opinion "that the operations of the Meteorological Office have been attended with great advantage to science and to the country;" but it would be difficult to show in what that advantage consists. We have daily reports, and some of our papers now give daily charts of the weather for the twenty-four hours last *past*. But these are utterly useless to the community, and the only value they could have with men of science is precisely that which no man of science has yet found in them—the possi-

bility, namely, that from them there might be deduced a trustworthy system of weather-prediction. Occasionally a storm warning is issued. But no attempt is made to publish systematic anticipations of approaching weather. Compare this with the results which have been obtained in America, by the judicious expenditure of a much larger annual sum. There every day the daily papers (in all parts of the United States) announce the probable weather of the coming day for each division of the States, and these predictions are nine times out of ten correct, and are not once in a hundred times altogether wrong. As we have said, the annual cost of the system is much greater. Some 50,000*l.* are expended on the Meteorological Office. But surely it would be better to spend 50,000*l.* for so useful a purpose than to throw 10,000*l.* annually away as we now do. Though, indeed, it does not seem quite clear why, if 50,000*l.* suffice for the effective meteorological survey of the United States, thirty times as large as the British Isles, a much smaller sum might not suffice to supply corresponding results for this country. The proper meteorological survey of all Europe ought to cost little more than that of the United States, seeing that Europe and the United States are not very unequal in extent. If England bore her fair share of such expenditure, our annual meteorological charges would be much less than 10,000*l.*

It appears, too, from the evidence brought before the Commission, that the scientific departments of the public service suffer from the want of scientific advice, which might be obtained at no very serious expense (compared at least with its value). Sir H. Rawlinson states that some blunders made in India, chiefly through this deficiency, "may involve a loss of 200,000*l.* or 300,000*l.* to the British Government." Capt. Douglas Galton expressed the opinion "that there had been an enormous amount of money wasted upon inquiries into the best form of armour-plates, conducted by non-scientific persons." The naval architect, Mr. Froude, C.E., considered that a vast saving might have been effected "if there had existed proper laboratories in which experiments might have been carried out for the benefit of the Admiralty." Sir W. Thomson gave as his opinion that if Government had enjoyed the advice of a scientific council, the *Captain* would never have been constructed on the ill-judged plan which resulted in her loss and the loss of more than five hundred lives. "Very nearly 3,000,000*l.* of the nation's money is expended at Woolwich," says the *Daily News*, "expended judiciously according to official lights. But these lights do not appear to be brilliant or satisfactory; for the frank avowal of the superintendent of machinery is 'that we are groping in the dark in almost everything at present.' The same eminent gentleman is confident that his steam-engines are not doing one-sixth of the work which they might be made to do if only a few qualified men were told off by Government to look into the point. The warden of the standards complains that he can command no trustworthy scientific information with respect to trial-plates for coins; and it is manifest that in not a few Government departments the same want is experienced."

We cannot wonder, when we consider such points as these, to find that there is almost complete consent among scientific men in favour of State aid for the forms of scientific research we have been dealing with, researches, namely, which have a national value, and not only promise to advance the material well-being of the people, but have (some of them) already done so in no inconsiderable degree. Nay, not only scientific men but statesmen have naturally been influenced by such considerations. "Lord Derby and Sir Stafford Northcote," we are told, "are almost as decided as the men of science themselves in their opinion that it may be legitimate and expedient to come to the aid of *researches which are beneficial to the whole community*."

But when we pass from researches of this nature to researches having a merely philosophical interest, or which, though they may result in discoveries valuable to humanity, are not conducted with that direct aim, the case is considerably altered. Of course the thorough student of science has for his aim the discovery of truth, not the mere increase of the material wealth or power of man. But although this consideration will suffice to encourage researches not tending to ameliorate the condition of humanity, or to increase a nation's store of wealth, it does not appear sufficient of itself to justify any large expenditure of the national money on such researches. The nation has a direct interest in one class of researches, while, *as a nation*, it takes no interest, and therefore in point of fact *has* no interest, in the other. The distinction should be carefully noted. Probably the number of persons in England who take an interest in the scientific principles of agriculture, meteorology, applied chemistry, and so forth, bears no greater proportion to the population than the number who take interest in the physics of astronomy, in the exploration of the sea-bottom, in the existence or non-existence of an open sea round the North Pole, or the like. But the whole population, though it may *take* no interest in the former class of subjects, *has*, nevertheless, a very real interest in them; and therefore scientific discoveries in these subjects have a real value to the nation. Whereas the only value which discoveries about the sun and planets, the sea-bottom, the North Pole, and so on, can have, or be expected to have, resides in the interest such discoveries excite in the philosophic mind; so that for those persons, at present the enormous majority of the population, who take no interest in them, they have no value whatever. And though some of the national money may very fairly be granted for the sake of that small but select portion of the population which does take interest in such matters, it becomes a serious question whether any sums likely to increase taxation appreciably can in justice be granted for researches in which the nation (as such) takes little or no interest. The average Englishman might in that case very justly argue as Herbert Spencer has imagined him to argue, addressing Government in some such words as these: "Your amiable anxiety for my welfare shows itself in taking money *out of my pocket* to provide me with various conveniences . . . Out of my pocket, did I say? Not always.

Sometimes out of the pocket of those least able to afford it; as when from poor 'science authors,' who commonly lose by their works, you demand *gratis* copies for your public libraries, that I and others, who don't want to read them, may read them for nothing. But these things you offer are things I do not ask. I do not want you to ascertain for me the nature of the sun's corona, or to find a north-west passage, or to explore the bottom of the sea. Instead of doing what I want, you persist in doing other things. Instead of securing me the bread due to my efforts, you give me a stone, a sculptured block from Ephesus." Where the sums devoted by Government to scientific enquiries and expeditions are so small as not to increase taxation appreciably, this sort of reasoning has of course no great force; but it is of great weight as against any wide scheme for the prosecution of scientific researches not directly advancing the material interests of the nation.

It will probably be considered by most persons that the course which has been actually adopted by Government for many years past is a reasonable mean between the lavish expenditure which those interested in science might desire, and that absolute avoidance of expenditure on scientific matters of mere philosophic interest which the majority of the population would insist upon, could their votes be taken. What the Government has done has been to grant assistance in such scientific operations only as could not be carried out by private means. Thus we have had eclipse expeditions at a cost of several thousand pounds (independent of the use of Government ships for transport), the late transit expeditions at a cost of 15,000*l.* (a rather shabby allowance, however, for this country), the voyage of the *Challenger*, the expedition to the North Pole, and so on; whilst doubtless we may expect that hereafter assistance of the same kind will be afforded on a scale gradually increasing as the scientific element of our population increases in number and influence.

Unfortunately (as it seems to us) the report of the Royal Commission suggests a much more considerable expenditure on the part of Government for researches of the class considered, and thus the just claims advanced in the report seem likely to suffer by the intrusion of claims which the country generally is by no means likely to admire.

To begin with: a proposition which might be entertained reasonably enough if associated only with scientific researches tending to increase the power and advance the material interests of the nation, assumes a totally different aspect in connection with the suggestion of lavish expenditure for the endowment of pure science. We refer to the suggested creation of a science ministry. It *might* be desirable (though even so limited a proposition is open to grave objections) to have a minister whose express duty should be the superintendence of the scientific departments of Government. And even the suggestion that "in connection with and supplementary to this ministry there should be a sort of permanent scientific council whose advice the ministry might obtain" (query, and

follow?) might be worth considering, if scientific matters of imperial moment only were to be dealt with. But a ministry having, as an important part of its duty, the control of large sums of money for researches of only philosophic interest, would certainly be objected to by the country at large, and the practical carrying out of this suggestion might excite a hostility to science and to scientific men which would most seriously injure the prospects of science in this country.

But let us consider some of the suggestions made by the Commission as to the actual scientific operations which, they think, might with advantage be subsidized by Government. We may premise that, although in nearly all of these suggestions relating to matters outside the scientific departments already considered, we find a reference to the possible advantages which might result from scientific discoveries, we must treat the suggested arrangements as relating only to matters of philosophic interest, because the nation cannot seriously be invited to take part in a mere scientific lottery. Researches definitely directed to the improvement of scientific methods of known utility, or to the extended application of fruitful methods, might be reasonably advocated; but vague hopes that, by the creation of a State laboratory, something useful *might* turn up, or that by an observatory for studying the physics of astronomy, something would be learned about the sun or the moon, stars, planets, comets, or meteors, which *might* advance the material welfare of the human race, are scarce worthy of serious consideration. We must limit our attention to the philosophic interest of discoveries to be effected in such laboratories or observatories, unless it can be shown definitely (which no one pretends) in what manner the researches to be conducted may be expected to lead to results of real utility.*

But here we cannot but notice how those advocates for the lavish endowment of science, whose opinions have been most strongly brought to bear on the late Commission, have apparently recognised the necessity

* It will of course be understood that we are here speaking only in the sense in which the vast majority of the taxpayers, *out of whose pockets, be it remembered, the money for these projects would come*—might be expected to view any wide scheme for the endowment of science. As a student of science himself, the writer would consider that even any large sums devoted (honestly) to the advancement of pure science, without direct reference to material benefits, would be exceedingly well bestowed. But we must remember that it is the opinion of the majority, not the opinion of the scientific few, which would have to be taken if the question of taxation for such purposes could actually be voted upon. If a body of skilful engineers had to decide about devoting their own money to some engineering scheme, they could fairly vote according to their views of its advantages or disadvantages; but if they had been appointed by a large body of shareholders to enquire into the scheme, and though satisfied themselves of its advantages, found themselves quite unable to satisfy those shareholders, it would be thought very unfair if they tried to override the objections which the shareholders were entitled to make, and carried out the scheme despite the wishes of those whose money they expended. They might be abundantly right, and therefore the shareholders altogether wrong, but the injustice would remain unchanged.

for suggesting that useful consequences may flow from enquiries which have long been pursued solely because of their scientific interest. Thus we have such vague promises as appear in the following passage from an address delivered at the last meeting of the British Association:—"It cannot be doubted that a great generalisation is looming in the distance—*a mighty law we cannot yet tell what, that will reach us we cannot yet say when.* It will involve facts inexplicable, facts that are scarcely received as such because they appear opposed to our present knowledge of their causes. It is not possible, perhaps, to hasten the arrival of this generalisation beyond a certain point; but we ought not to forget that we can hasten it, and that it is our duty to do so. It depends much on ourselves, our resolution, our earnestness, on the scientific policy we adopt, as well as on the power we may have to devote ourselves to special investigations, whether such an advent shall be realised in our day and generation, or whether it shall be indefinitely postponed. If Government would understand the ultimate material advantages of every step forward in science, however inapplicable such may appear for the moment to the wants or pleasures of ordinary life, they would find reasons, patent to the meanest capacities, for bringing the wealth of mind, now lost on the drudgery of common labours, to bear on the search for those wondrous laws which govern every movement, not only of the mighty masses of our system, but of every atom distributed throughout space."

These vague promises of mighty material results, of mighty laws "we cannot yet tell what" which are to "reach us we cannot yet tell when," were even more conspicuous in the advocacy of a scheme for "an observatory for studying the physics of astronomy." "Permanent national provision is urgently needed," said Lieut.-Colonel Strange, a Fellow of the Astronomical Society (who first conceived this scheme), "for the cultivation of the physics of astronomy. If the study of the sun alone were in question, that alone would justify such a measure; for there can hardly be a doubt that almost every natural phenomenon connected with climate can be distinctly traced to the sun as the great dominating force, and the inference is unavoidable that the changes, and what we now call the uncertainties of climate, are connected with the constant fluctuations which we now know to be perpetually occurring in the sun itself. The bearing of a vast array of problems connected with navigation, agriculture, and health, need but to be mentioned to show the importance of seeking in the sun, where they doubtless reside, for the causes which govern these changes. It is indeed my conviction that of all the fields now open for scientific cultivation, there is not one which, quite apart from its transcendent philosophical interest, promises results of such high utilitarian value as the exhaustive systematic study of the sun."

As this is a typical instance of the promises held out by the advocates of the new schemes, it may be well to consider it at some length. It need hardly be said that science warrants none of the expectations mentioned by Lieut.-Colonel Strange. It is believed, by several astro-

nomers that the eleven-year cycle in which sun-spots wax and wane in number and frequency on the solar globe affects the condition of our globe with respect to temperature; but while some stoutly assert that the heat is greatest where there are no spots, others affirm with equal confidence that at those times the heat is least. Some meteorologists, again, consider that the rainfall is modified during the spot-cycle in this subtle manner, that the proportion of rain with south-westerly winds to rain with north-easterly winds is greater or less according as the spots are more or less numerous. But one law is found for England (Oxford) in this matter, and a contrary law in Russia (St. Petersburg), so that it is surmised that somewhere between Oxford and St. Petersburg there is no effect. Later observations suggest that this "somewhere" is shifting, and therefore necessarily the boundary line to which it belongs is shifting also. In other words, the results are such as would suggest to any but a very earnest theorist, the conviction that there is no association at all between the rainfall and the spot-cycle. In like manner cyclonic storms have been imagined to have an eleven-yearly cycle, though it is not yet settled whether storms are more or less numerous when the sun is most spotted. The electric condition of the earth has been more definitely associated with the spot-cycle—in fact, this is the only relation which seems pretty generally admitted. Yet even the existence of this relation is flatly denied by so high an authority as the Astronomer Royal. And even if all these relations were certainly established, instead of being for the most part doubtful, they would in no sense tend to establish Colonel Strange's amazing proposition. For not one of these relations is of the slightest "utilitarian value,"—whatever its philosophic interest might be, supposing it demonstrated instead of imagined. And even if these relations, instead of being quite without material value, were of some use, yet as they depend on a solar peculiarity quite striking and obvious, they could prove nothing respecting the relatively most subtle solar changes which yet remain to be detected. As the facts actually are, it is proved to demonstration that no "utilitarian value" whatsoever can exist in discoveries respecting the laws of solar change. For it is shown that a solar cycle far more remarkable even than others since discovered, and *a fortiori* surpassing in importance those which have hitherto escaped detection, has either no influence whatever on the phenomena of weather, or none of sufficient importance to be worth knowing *on account of its "utilitarian value."*

It is not, however, merely the unsoundness of the scientific views thus advanced in support of the scheme for a physical observatory of astronomy that we would indicate. A far more important point is suggested by this particular instance of unwise advocacy. When we find that the Royal Commission to some degree adopts the suggestion that material benefits may be derived from the study of solar physics, we might naturally assume that this idea had at least received the sanction of the leading astronomers of England, and that the opinion of the Com-

mission was based upon their evidence. Should it appear that this was not the case in this particular instance, we should be led to enquire (somewhat wonderingly) on what principle the evidence for the guidance of the Commission in this and other matters had been selected. Now it so happens that this very question of an observatory for studying the physics of astronomy was brought before the Council of the Astronomical Society with the express purpose of obtaining their influence in favour of the scheme. No arguments that could be urged in its support were omitted. The question was adjourned from one meeting of the Council to another, including two meetings specially convened for the discussion of that matter alone. Yet, when the question was put to the vote, only four votes were given in favour of the scheme; the majority against it including (1) the leading official astronomer in England, (2) the greatest master of the physics of astronomy, (3) the ablest mathematician in Europe, (4) the private astronomer who, next after the late Lord Rosse, has penetrated farthest into the celestial depths, and many other well-known astronomers. The minority of four included the author of the above-quoted passage, and two other ardent advocates of the scheme for a science ministry and the lavish endowment of science. At the next meeting of the Council these three resigned their seats on the Council, stating as their reason the Council's refusal to support their scheme. When we consider these facts in connection with the circumstance that the Royal Commission received no evidence save from members of the defeated minority, we perceive that strong influence must have been exerted in this special instance to secure a favourable verdict from the Commission. And thus some doubts are suggested as to the quality of the evidence on which the other opinions of the Commission were based, —not, we need hardly say, that we need question for a moment the *bona fides* of the evidence, but simply that we seem justified in doubting whether evidence unfavourable for particular projects was admitted as readily as evidence in their favour, if admitted at all.

It remains that we should consider how far it is desirable that State support should be afforded to students of science. Hitherto the pecuniary assistance granted to students of science by the State or by learned societies has been limited to expenditure actually incurred for apparatus, and so forth. Only a few fortunate individuals—or rather, perhaps, a few who have been exceptionally skilful in making requests—have received even so much assistance. But it is now urged that the science labourer should receive something more than the mere price of his tools—that, in fact, since he gives his time and labour to the work of research, he should be remunerated just as any other worker would be.

We may note, at the outset, that this part of our subject is closely associated with the last. In fact, we are now considering the personal cost of scientific researches, whereas before we were considering their national cost. The same general reasoning is applicable to one case as to the other. If the nation has the right and should have the power to

select what kind of work it will pay for, it has an equal right and should have equal power to decide whether any given class of workers shall receive State aid.

We must not mix up this question with the general question, whether the student of science should receive remuneration, or—to speak plainly—should work for money. A great deal of nonsense is sometimes heard on this point. People who do not think it strange or wrong that the minister of religion should be paid for his work, who can even contemplate with considerable satisfaction the princely incomes of some of our prelates, will often speak of the student of science who earns money by means of his scientific knowledge as though he were degrading science. Of such a man they will say, as though some special disgrace attached to the words, he is trading on his scientific knowledge; yet they would be startled (so great is the difference that custom makes) if anyone were to say of a church dignitary that he was trading on his theological learning or on his spiritual experience. And sundry stories are related to show how the true lover of truth has behaved. We are reminded how Faraday despised the thousands which he might have gained by turning his physical experience to trade purposes; how Agassiz, when offered high reward for imparting knowledge, said he had no time to earn money, and so forth. It is forgotten that, in these and other instances, eminent men of science have merely sacrificed superfluities, or, rather, they have justly valued those opportunities for scientific study at a higher rate than other luxuries which money could bring them. Faraday had ample means, and made ample provision for his family; Agassiz, if he could not spare time to earn money, permitted his wife to earn it for him by teaching; and it has not yet happened, so far as we know, that any student of science has been so unduly zealous in the search after truth as to insist, for its sake, on remaining poor, and on bringing want upon his family. There is no reason why he should do so, while there are abundant reasons why he should not. As Huxley has said, the student of science is “not only a citizen, but he is a citizen in the first place, and a student of science in the second.” If he is a true lover of science, the study of science affords him profound pleasure, and this pleasure is well worth the sacrifice of a good deal of money; but as a citizen he is bound to ask how much money he can afford (either to pay or to sacrifice, it matters little which) for that pleasure. Duty must come first, and if duty towards himself and his family requires that he should earn money, he must, *pro tanto*, sacrifice science. Should it so chance that science drudgery—teaching science, writing or lecturing about it, making practical use of it, or the like—affords an available means of earning money, he may be thankful it is no worse, and that duty does not compel him to abandon science altogether. But assuredly he is open to no blame for doing his duty first, and considering pleasure (the great pleasure of his life, that is,—the pursuit of truth) afterwards.

While it is manifest, however, that the student of science, like his

fellow-citizens, must earn money, unless he already possesses it, and must (in these times) try to earn a good deal of money if he has many to maintain besides himself, and while it is equally manifest that his scientific labours would progress much faster if he were relieved from this necessity, it by no means follows that on that account the nation ought to be taxed for his support. The nation, as we have already pointed out, has a right to select what it wants, and the conviction of a few or even of many men of science that excellent results would follow if science were lavishly subsidized, is not a sufficient reason for taking money from taxpayers, the vast majority of whom would object to pay the money for that purpose if the questions were plainly submitted to them.

But there is not, in point of fact, that unanimity of opinion among scientific men on this point which some have asserted. It is indeed very gravely questioned by many of the most eminent men of science in the country, whether if large sums were devoted to the endowment of science, the right men would get the money. The men who would be readiest to thrust themselves forward when money was offered for scientific research would not probably be the men to whom scientific research is a delight. It is not everyone who studies science, nor even is it everyone who has done good work in science, who is possessed by the true scientific spirit. It is not wholly impossible that some who on the strength of past services or perchance one solitary success, might thrust themselves into the most forward positions, would not be found ready to continue the arduous prosecution of scientific labours when once they found themselves placed in well-paid offices.*

Of course, a good deal would depend on the manner in which candidates were selected, and on the kind and degree of supervision exercised over the holders of various scientific offices. Competitive examinations, whether justly or unjustly objected to in the case of naval, military, and civil service appointments, would assuredly be required for the new scientific service. Mere popular repute would be a perfectly useless criterion. A man may be popularly reputed an authority in chemistry who could not be trusted to effect the most ordinary analysis, or in geology, whose whole knowledge of the science has been derived at second-hand from its real masters. The public may regard as an eminent astronomer a man who has not really mastered the merest elements of mathematics, or as a most

* We have before us a letter written by Professor Holden, of the Washington Observatory, which shows how Americans view a question which their practical good sense renders them especially well able to deal with. We shall venture to quote some passages from this letter, premising that though we feel sure Professor Holden would take no exception to our so doing, the letter was not intended for publication (it bears date June 2, 1875): "It has, I confess, been a wonder to me," he writes, "how the endowment of research could be seriously advocated by anyone who had considered what the practical outcome would be. It is faultless in theory, but practically science would suffer if the restrictions were removed which have grown up about the greedy. . . . I take pride in Young's researches on the sun, done in the midst of class-room work, and am prepared to believe that the whole work of the

skilful physicist one who has but made ingenious use of the discoveries which others have laboriously worked out. Nor can any reliance be placed, as so many imagine, on the fact that a student of science is a member of many learned bodies in our own country or abroad. Such honours are open to almost anyone who is prepared to take the proper course to obtain them; that course being such as some science workers consider not wholly consistent either with self-respect or with the dignity of science. And unfortunately there is reason for believing that if the appointments to scientific offices were left to ministerial responsibility, personal recommendations not entirely based on the scientific profundity of the candidate for office, would come into operation. An examination conducted by professors from our universities and scientific institutions (in other words, by men already thoroughly tested by long service), would obviate these objections, though probably considerably narrowing the field of selection, for many who would very readily accept some of the offices which the new scientific ministry might create would be somewhat unwilling to undergo the test of examination in those departments of mathematics and physics with which every thorough student of science should be familiar. It may even be questioned whether the men really competent to undergo such an ordeal would not be likely to have already achieved such success as would render the best paid offices under the new ministry scarce worth their acceptance.

Another point to be mentioned rather affects the interests of science than those we have hitherto chiefly considered—the interests, namely, of the tax-paying community. It has hitherto been found that in the civil, military, and naval services, the rule has come into operation which Herbert Spencer has called the "ineradicable vice of all services," the rule of putting young officials under old, and thus "placing the advanced ideas and wider knowledge of a new generation under control of the ignorance and bigotry of a generation to which change has become repugnant." As Herbert Spencer well remarks, this "which is a seemingly ineradicable vice of public organisations, is a vice to which private organisations are far less liable; since in the life-and-death struggle of competition, merit, even if young, takes the place of demerit, even if old." We need

man helps science along more than it would if New Hampshire had made him Government astronomer and spectroscopist in ordinary. Fancy our Congress endowing research! We are very well off. We live under the despotism of poverty, tempered by the Smithsonian Institute . . . I doubt, too, if England could manage the distribution of any large sum among the proper men. Some of the most eminent ought not to have a share, since they are lazy, and some of the hard-working lack brains. How would one go to work to pay Burnham or Dembowski" (distinguished observers and measurers of double stars) "for their work?" When we remember the singularly rapid progress which science has made and is making in America, and the readiness with which the American Government has responded to proper appeals for assistance to science (as in the recent eclipse expeditions, the transit expeditions, and still more in scientific researches promising results of material value), we cannot attribute to any deficiency of zeal or liberality the objections which Americans entertain against schemes for the endowment of research.

not insist on mischievous effects which would follow if those men of science who, under the present system, would enter on a line of research of their own, were, merely for the sake of some fixed salary, to accept office under an old chief whose antiquated views they would be expected to carry out. Already, even with the present comparatively limited scientific service, we see the effect of such arrangements. We see also the still more mischievous effect of another peculiarity of public service, the fact that men reserve their powers (even to the extent of doing absolutely nothing) in anticipation of their appointment to offices not as yet vacant, while the holder of the office, perhaps already too old for efficient service, carefully reserves such powers as he still has, in order that he may hold the office as long as possible.

The proper course, as the present writer has elsewhere indicated, would be "to proceed tentatively. It is almost certain that any general scheme formed at the present time would hereafter have to be largely modified, if not wholly abandoned. The time has not yet arrived when the nation would look with satisfaction on any wide scheme of scientific endowment, even if Parliament could be persuaded to make adequate grants for such a scheme, or to authorize the employment for that purpose of funds available at the two universities. The nation is probably not unwilling to see experiments made on the effect of endowment for special scientific purposes. If such experiments were made, we should gradually perceive whether wider schemes were likely to be advantageous to science, or whether dangers may not lurk in all such schemes. It might be found that endowment would greatly tend to increase the number of those entering on scientific pursuits, while widening also the range of scientific culture. Or, on the other hand, it might be found that the national endowment of science would tend only to advance scientific Micawberism, and that the real workers in science would be discouraged by seeing all the best rewards given for pretentious novelties, clever adaptations, perhaps, of their own discoveries. Practical experience has, indeed, already taught that dangers, and serious ones, surround such schemes. Before long, however, the real position of affairs will be known. If the present desire for the endowment of research is prompted by genuine zeal for science, we shall find that the warmest advocates of the scheme are not those who would themselves profit by it. But if, on the other hand, it should appear that the persons who now speak most earnestly about the endowment of science are in reality eager chiefly for their own preferment or wish to secure posts of emolument for personal friends and adherents, then every lover of real science must desire the failure of such schemes, seeing that the cause of science would not fail to suffer, nor science herself to be degraded should they prove successful."

The Early Years of Dante.

THE historical records of the city of Florence are full of interest to all students of national progress and popular government; but the general reader will scarcely find a link of attraction strong enough to carry him through these complicated records of feuds and factions, unless by the help of some central figure great enough to inspire the old dead world with reality, and make a forgotten century live again. Dante is, to many untravelled lovers of the beautiful and great, the very embodiment, the living soul of Florence—always living, always strong and full of the most vivid reality, though six centuries have passed since his eyes beheld *lo dolce lume*—the sweet light of mortal day. Genius has never proved its potency so mightily as by the way in which so many petty tumults and factionaries of the thirteenth century, so many trifling incidents and local circumstances, passed out of all human importance for the last six hundred years, have been held suspended in a fierce light of life and reality, unable to perish and get themselves safe into oblivion up to this very day in consequence of their connection with this one man. Even now writers discuss them hotly, and students rake into the dust of old histories for further particulars of those street riots and rough jests six hundred years old which led to so much blood and mischief; not that they were of themselves more important than other local mediæval tumults, but because the hand of the poet has touched them, or his shadow somewhere fixed them for ever on the common recollection as daylight now fixes so many vulgar portraits. The men who injured Florence, and those who tried to save her in that day, were of themselves no more interesting than the generations of local plotters and heroes who came after them in a perpetual succession of struggles down to the time when anarchy and the ceaseless changes of an unsettled government found their natural quietus in the calm of absolute tyranny. But the names of the older generations are writ in brass on the glowing walls of the *Inferno*, or in softer lines across the hopeful glades of the *Purgatorio*; while toiling historians have but succeeded in inscribing a record of the others in the undisturbed dust of here and there a library shelf.

This is what the poet has done for his generation; and it is more than Shakespeare has done for his—a difference which it is not difficult, however, to account for by the different characters of the men and the scenes in which they lived. To our poet his England was the world, full of every possible type of humanity, and affording him suggestions for his Moor, his Jew, his Venetian, as well as for his Falstaff and his Prince Hal.

But to the Florentine Florence in all her straitness, shut in by the walls of that *Cerchia Antica* which antiquarians can still trace for us, was the actual universe. No Othello, no Shylock, strange to the soil, ever dawned upon his intense concentrated vision ; but he saw with tremendous vividness and reality the people around him, the greatness of them and the pettiness of their sycophants—Filippo Argenti in the mud, as well as Brunetto's torture on those burning sands where fell like snow the "dilated" flakes of fire. Dante was born, lived, loved, and struggled for all the most momentous part of his life not only in that small old Florence, but in a corner of it, knowing from his childhood every individual of the *vicini*, and loving and hating them as only people so closely shut up together can love and hate ; while Shakespeare had the freedom of the country to range through, a little youthful vagabondism at merry Stratford, a taste of the great life of his noble patrons, and of the Bohemian life of his players, and of everything that was going in the fresh island air crisped by the sea. The circumstances are as different as the minds of the two poets, if anything tangible can ever be so different as the genius of Dante is from that of Shakespeare. Accordingly the Italian has lifted his entire generation with him into the skies, and by so doing has not only secured for us an acquaintance with the time which is unparalleled in minuteness and vivid force, but has hampered us with a literature of commentary which we suppose no other writer of the modern world has ever called forth. We will not attempt to follow the crowd of learned Italians who live and breathe and have their being in Dante, through the many convolutions of history which sometimes bid fair to strangle, like the Laocoön, the poet himself and his great poem in their multiplied and intricate folds. Indeed, we think the time has come when, so far as the *Divina Commedia* is concerned, a reverse treatment would be advantageous, and those parts of the poem which belong to humanity and are everywhere comprehensible, might be separated from those which are woven into the tangled web of Tuscan history. However, our present occupation is with the man rather than the poem, in as far as the great, impassioned, intense spirit who wrote can ever be detached from that memorable record of himself and his age, in which all the lofty but fierce passions, all the exquisite softenings of feeling, all the strange exalted thoughts, rigid opinions, antiquated learning, and profound humanity of the man are and continue as if he still lived among us. What Dante is in the *Divine Comedy* we know ; and how Dante grew to be what he is, and among what surroundings, he himself has left us the means of finding out, aided by a band of patriotic biographers, such as do honour to the unswerving faithfulness of Italian enthusiasm for the greatest poet of the race.

The little Florence in which Dante was born was very much unlike the noble and beautiful Florence which is now, like Jerusalem, a joy of the whole earth, and whose splendour and serious beauty seem to justify the wonderful adoration of her which her children have always shown, and which this her greatest son made into a kind of worship. The high houses

that rose in narrow lines closely approaching each other with a continual menace across the strait thread of street, had not yet attained to the characteristic individuality of Tuscan architecture ; the beautiful cathedral, which so many a traveller, thoughtless of dates, has contemplated from the Sasso di Dante with a dim notion that Dante himself must have sat there many a summer evening watching the glorious walls rise and the great noble fabric come into being, had not, even in the lower altitude given to it by Arnolfo, begun to be when the poet was born. The old Bargello and the Palazzo Vecchio were still in process of building ; Santa Croce, Santa Maria Novella, and Giotto's lovely campanile were all in the future with all their riches. The ancient Badia, or Abbey of Florence, still struck the hour, as the poet records, to all the listening city ; and though the bridges, curiously enough, had all been built, there was scarcely as yet any Oltr'arno, only a very small scrap of that side of the river being enclosed within the second circle of walls, which extended from the Ponte alle Grazie, or Rubaconte, newly built, to the Ponte alla Carraja, also new, and so round by San Lorenzo and the square of the cathedral, then cumbered by houses and occupied only by the ancient little church of Santa Reparata, facing the Baptistry, which is the only building of the group that existed in Dante's day. Very different then must have been that double square. The Baptistry had not even got its coating of marbles, but was still in flint, grey and homely, when the child of the Alighieri was christened there ; and little Santa Reparata, with its graveyard round it, lay deep down as in a well in the heart of the tall houses. The Baptistry, too, was surrounded by graves, its square being filled up by sarcophagi of a still older date, in which—a curious fancy—many of the greater families of Florence buried their dead. The tower of one of the great houses in the square was called *Guardia-morta*, "watcher of the dead," so closely round these little centres of the buried clustered the houses of the living. But to the old church of the Baptist, the "bel San Giovanni" of the poet, every child of Florence was carried then, as now, to be made a Christian. The great solemn interior, still and cool and calm amid the blazing sunshine, remains alone unchanged amid all the alterations around. The graves have been cleared away, the great Duomo has been built, the tower of Giotto, fairy fabric of genius, defying all its tons of marble to make it less like a lily born of dew and sunshine, has sprung up into the heavens ; but San Giovanni is still the same, and still the new Florentines are carried into its serene solemnity of gloom to be enrolled at once in the Church and in the world by names which may be heard of hereafter—as was the infant Durante, Dante, prince of poets and everlasting ruler of Florence, in the year 1265, in that month of May which, under Tuscan skies, is the true May, after which in our northern latitudes we sigh in vain.

Only five years before, Florence herself, with all her fame and promise unfulfilled, was as near destruction as ever city was—not by her enemies, but by her own sons born in her bosom. The ceaseless and sickening struggles of the Guelfs and Ghibellines had begun some time before, and

once all the Guelfs and once all the Ghibellines had been banished from the city, when the victory of Mont'aperto made the Ghibellines masters for the second time, of the town. It seems incredible, after all we have heard and said of the intense devotion of Italian citizens of those times to their city, that there actually was a discussion between the victors whether or not they should destroy altogether the home out of which, as the most dreadful of punishments, each faction in its turn drove its opponents; but such was the case. After this battle of Mont'aperto, a general meeting of the Ghibelline party was held at Empoli, where this proposal was made, and—supported warmly by the delegates of all the other Ghibelline cities—would certainly have been carried out save for the resistance of Farinata degli Uberti, a member of a family so thoroughly detested in Florence that their palace had been quite recently destroyed as Jericho was, under penalties against anyone who should attempt to rebuild it. Farinata, however, was the sole Florentine bold enough to stand up for the city in which his paternal home had been razed to the ground. The reader of the *Inferno* will remember the fine passage in which his great deed has been made immortal. It is one of the most remarkable in the whole poem. The great Ghibelline, raising himself from the sepulchre in which he is imprisoned, lifting up breast and brow "as if he held hell in scorn," and the old Cavalcanti beside him, who, hearing the name of the mortal visitor, immediately rises too, to look if his Guido, Dante's friend, is with him, are amongst the most impressive figures of that gloomy landscape. "I was not alone," says Farinata, "in the deeds which moved the wrath of Florence against my race; but alone I stood when all around me would have destroyed Florence, and defended her with open face." * This extra-

* Those to whom this beautiful passage is familiar will bear us no malice for repeating it here, and those who have forgotten it will, we trust, be pleased to have it recalled to them. Dante has penetrated into the city of Dis, and traversing the ring of living sepulchres which surround the walls, talking with Virgil, is suddenly addressed by one of the sufferers:—

"Oh, Tuscan, thus with open mortal speech
 That by the burning city living goes,
 Please you to pause awhile when here you reach;
 To me the language of your utterance shows
 That from that noble land you take your birth
 To which perchance I brought too many woes.
 Suddenly came this voice, that issued forth
 From out a tomb; at which I faltering drew
 A little closer to my leader's worth.
 He said to me: 'Turn; know you what you do?
 'Tis Farinata who, thus raised upright,
 From brow to girdle shows himself to you.'
 I had already fixed on him my sight.
 Proudly his brow and breast upward he swayed
 As one who held this hell in high despite,
 With eager hand and quick my leader made
 Between him and the sepulchre a way,
 And thrust me there. 'Thy time is brief,' he said

ordinary risk, from which the city, rising into so much importance, escaped only by the patriotism of one of those party leaders who were her

When to the tomb's foot I had made my way,
 He looked at me; then, with a half-disdain,
 Questioned me thus: ' Thy fathers? who were they? '
 To do his will eager I was and fain,
 And all recounted to him, hiding nought.
 A little rose his eyebrows proud: again
 He spoke: ' Fiercely adverse were they, in thought
 And deed, to me, my party, and my race:
 So were they twice to flight and exile brought.'
 ' If they were exiled, driven from place to place,'
 Quickly I said, ' yet home they found their way:
 Your faction never learned that happy grace.'
 Then rose there suddenly from where it lay
 Unseen, another shade, the face alone
 O'er the tomb's edge raised, as one kneeling may;
 And round me looked, gazing, as if for one
 Who might perchance be following after me;
 When it was clearly seen that there was none,
 Weeping— If these blind prisons thus you see,'
 He said, ' and thread by loftiness of mind,
 Where is my son? why is he not with thee? '
 I said: ' Not by myself my way I find;
 And unto him who leads and makes it plain
 Thy Guido's soul perchance was ne'er inclined.'
 Thus by his words and manner of his pain
 Guided I was to answer full and right,
 So clear I read his meaning and his name.
 ' How said'st thou?—was? Ah, lives he then no more?
 Strikes his dear eyes no more the blessed light? '
 When he perceived me pause, and I forbore
 Unto this question any quick reply,
 Prostrate he dropped, and thence appeared no more.
 But that heroic shade whose prison I
 Had first approached and by whom still remained,
 Unchanged in aspect and in gesture high,
 Moved not, but the first argument maintained.
 ' If,' said he, ' they have badly learned that art,
 By that, more than this bed, my soul is pained.
 But ere the queen who rules this gloomy part
 Shall fifty times uplift her gleaming face,
 That lesson, hard to learn, shall crush thy heart.
 If in the sweet world thou would'st e'er find grace,
 Tell me why thus 'gainst all who bear my name
 The people rage, and hard laws curse and chase? '
 I answered him: ' The bitter strife and shame
 That died the flowing Arbia crimson-red
 Has in our temple raised such height of blame.'
 Sighing, he said, and shook his mournful head:
 ' In these things, was I not alone, nor could,
 Without grave reason, be by others led.
 But I stood sole, when all consenting would
 Have swept off Florence from the earth; alone
 And openly in her defence I stood.' "

ruin, is as notable as anything in the exciting record of her tumultuous history.

When Dante, however, grew old enough to mark the world about him, the days of Ghibelline triumph were over, and the Guelfs had again got the upper hand. They, too, had banished and confiscated right and left as soon as their turn came, as indeed all parties continued to do in Florence, whatever they called themselves—the Guelfs and Ghibellines to-day, the Neri and Bianchi to-morrow, after a while the Albizzi and the Medici, the Arrabiati and the Piagnoni ; the name mattered little, the thing existed through century after century. When it was not two parties which contended for the mastery it was two families, a still worse kind of faction. The reader will not expect, nor we trust desire, a recapitulation and description for the hundredth time of the political faith of the Guelfs and Ghibellines. Probably at their beginning, even in Florence, the former supposed themselves to be on the side of the Church as the grand arbitrator of all national concerns in Europe, and the latter to look to the Emperor as holding that supreme position ; but it would be rash to conclude by this that either Church or Empire had much share in the thoughts of these pugnacious Florentines, whose personal feuds and hatreds, one faction against another, were infinitely more real and vivid than anything so far off as Emperor or Pope. Between the two central points of the city, the great public square surrounding the Palazzo Vecchio, the seat of government so to speak, where all public business was transacted, and the other square in which now rises the cathedral, lies an obscure little opening among the thronging houses, in which the little old homely church of San Martino still stands, and where, in the thirteenth century, the houses of the Alighieri stood. An old doorway opposite, almost the only remnant of the original building, which is still used for homely everyday purposes, shows where the "Divine Poeta" was born. Between this church and the old walls of the second circle was the scene of his life—not Florence, but his street and quarter of Florence, among the neighbours who, closely packed together, made part of each other's lives as only in the tiniest and most primitive of villages neighbours can do nowadays. Each family held together in its cluster of houses, building on new stories, thrusting forth new chambers as the branches of the tree grew, and the name increased in numbers and strength. The Portinari, the Donati, the Cerchi, inhabited each their palace-colony, their homely fortress, side by side with the Alighieri. They were neighbours in the most absolute form of the word. Impossible to know each other more closely, to be more completely aware of each other's defects and weaknesses, of each other's virtues and good qualities, than were the generations which succeeded each other in the same hates and friendships as in the same names and homes. Thus the boy Durante, Alighieri's son, no doubt knew from his cradle not only Folco Portinari's little Beatrice, but also the young Donati, Forese, and Piccarda, and probably that Gemma of whom he leaves no record though she was his wife. That little corner

of the closely-inhabited mediæval city was in itself an *imperium in imperio*. "In war," says Balbo, "every *sestiere* formed a distinct company with its own officers and ensigns ; in peace, they assembled together for the elections. . . . All this drew close the private relations between the inhabitants. The festivities of any one house were for all the neighbourhood, like that which was made in the Casa Portinari in May ; and among the neighbours were those meetings, those talks seated at the door of the house, and all the details of social life which we find in Boccaccio." This kind of familiar, homely, common life has fallen nowadays to the poorer classes alone. No noble matron, no cavalier bearing arms and authority, can now be found seated at the "uscio di casa" in kindly talk with the passing neighbours as they cross the street in the cool of the evening from vespers at San Martino, or come fresh from politics and business from the Palace of the Priors ; such close and friendly intercourse exists no longer. But the very sight of the narrow old streets conjures up the scene. The evening so cool and sweet after the hot day ; the heavy cornices of the old houses shutting out that strip of celestial blue above ; here and there over a garden wall the early summer betraying itself in breath of abundant roses, in the bright glow of a pomegranate blossom ; the high tower of the Badia pealing the hour, no nobler belfry yet existing in the city ; somewhere from the end of a street a glimpse visible beyond the walls of the terraced cone of Fiesole, with the darker hills behind ; and low down at the doorways, on the projecting outer stairs, in the cortile, upon which in dangerous times gates of defence were closed, what talk of the advance of trade, of the glorious buildings about to be begun which will make the world wonder, of those drivelling Ghibellines, crushed in every foolish town about which had thought to rival Florence ! or perhaps, in lower tones, Madonna Bella, Alighieri's young wife, half happy, half afraid, whispering to some young mother of the Portinari that dream she had before her child was born. Cheerful, narrow, yet kindly burgher life ; narrow, knowing no friendship out of the *vicinato*—yet broader by the very limits of that *vicinato* than our shut-up evenings in-doors ; and how they could hate each other, those neighbours, when occasion served, more passionately still than they could love !

One day, in Folco Portinari's great house round the corner, there was a friendly gathering. It was in the year 1275, just six centuries ago, and all the neighbours were invited, as was natural and seemly, parents and children, to celebrate the coming of the May. The sweet delusion of the May to which, deceived by our poets, themselves led into the error by southern troubadours, we cling with a fond and foolish faith which is always disappointed but never shaken, even in these colder regions, is no delusion in Italy. The Tuscan May is something like, we should suppose, what weather is in heaven ; and, frankly, given that exemption from grief and evil which is the first condition of heaven, it is scarcely possible to fancy what anyone could desire more for simple blessedness. The Florentines had the habit, in those early days, of going about the streets

in bands, the *vicinato* now assembled by one neighbour, now by another, with "dancing and delight," *di festeggiar l'entrante primavera*. Upon this special May that good and rich Folco, who afterwards built the great hospital, gave the feast to his neighbours. The story of it is told by two rare historians—Dante himself in the curious exaltation of his *Vita Nuova*, and Boccaccio. We will let the old storyteller, unrivalled in his craft, give his less impassioned description first:—

It happened that Folco Portinari, a man of great honour in those times among the citizens, had assembled the neighbours in his house to entertain them (*festeggiare*), among whom was the young man called Alighieri, whom (since little children, especially in places of merry-making, are accustomed to go with their parents) Dante, not having yet completed his ninth year, had accompanied. And it happened that with the others of his age, of whom, both boys and girls, there were many in the house, after he had served at the first tables as much as his tender age permitted, childishly with the others he began to play. There was among this crowd of children a daughter of the above-named Folco, whose name was Bice (though he always called her Beatrice, her formal name), who was about eight years old, gay and beautiful in her childish fashion, and in her behaviour very gentle and agreeable; with habits and language more serious and modest than her age warranted; and besides this with features so delicate and so beautifully regulated, and full, besides mere beauty, of so much candid loveliness that many thought her almost an angel. This girl then, such as I describe her, and perhaps even more beautiful, appeared at the *festa*—not, I suppose, for the first time, but for the first time in power to create love—before the eyes of Dante; who, though still a child, received her image into his heart with so much affection that from that day henceforward, as long as he lived, it never again departed from him.

The *Vita Nuova* of Dante is the story told in detail of the love which thus began—a love which has been perhaps more questioned, criticised, and commented upon than any other which the world has known since then. It is difficult to give any just description of this book to those who are unacquainted with it without something which may look to his adorers like irreverence towards the great poet. The student of the *Divine Comedy* can scarcely fail to experience a slight shock when he leaves the great and serious Florentine, most solemn of all travellers between life and death, and finds himself suddenly transplanted into the unreal and dazzling dimness of that curious and fantastical world of mediæval youth, with its one sentiment upon which are rung perpetual changes, its elaborate and sophistical refinements, yet childlike simpleness—a picture most artificial yet most real, fantastic as a dream, yet penetrated by the intense verity of the dreamer with a life which is beyond question. When, however, the strange atmosphere has become a little more familiar to the eye, the reader begins to find again, by help of this intensity, the same vivid and extraordinary individual whom under another guise he has accompanied in all his different moods—stern, tender, indignant, always himself—through the shadows and the mists of the *Inferno*. The strange youthful figure of the poet, so *bizarre* yet so true, possessed by a love so intense and passionate, which yet is expressed with all the artificial cadences and elaborate harp-twanging of a troubadour, is one of the most

wonderful things in literature : only youth could be at once so real and so unreal, so occupied by the manner of expressing its emotions, and yet so genuine in feeling of the emotion itself. The form of the strange romance is fictitious to the last degree. The elaborate sonnet put forth avowedly to a little quaint, old-world company of answering sonneteers, the fantastic explanations of every bit of verse, analysis and *résumé* done by rigidest rule, of those impassioned utterances of love, the sole reason and excuse for which is their spontaneous outburst straight from the heart —are all strangely out of harmony with what seems to us nowadays the straightforwardness of passion. And whether it was the passion of love, commonly so called, which moved Dante towards Beatrice is a question now never to be solved by the most curious enquiry. It would seem at least to have been not only one of those “loves which never knew an earthly close,” but never to have looked for or even dreamed of one—rather a passion of enthusiastic admiration, that high worship of chivalry for the supremely fair and distant which elevated and inspired the worshipper without suggesting to him any meaner desires, than that more hot and fleshly passion which generally bears the name. To look at Dante, highest prophet and poet of his country, and already full of all the awakening thoughts and blossom of his greatness, thus wandering through the old-world fields, in which flowers do not grow but are embroidered in quaint over-richness and imitation of the natural growth ; in which there is no stir of common life or purpose, but only one overpowering sentiment which fills all hearts ; in which only the *donne che hanno intelletto d'amore*, and fair sympathising youths, each with a love like his own, live, and wander with him through a magical radiance of light which is neither of the night nor of the day ; himself clad in quaintly imagined garments of the troubadour, passing the hours in song, occupied with nothing but Beatrice, except (and with this, perhaps, even more than with Beatrice) how to set the young lovely verses in which he celebrates her—is the strangest sight. This moonstruck, mystical young lover, is this he who out of the confusion and dark problems of life could find no nearer way than that tremendous round he made through hell and heaven ? He had leisure enough in those *beaux jours quand il était si malheureux* ; leisure to weep his young eyes dim, and fill his listening world with echoes of his lady's name, or rather of her sweetness and beauty and excellence above all praise ; how to look at her made a man good and pure, how shame and evil fled before her mild eyes, how her gesture of salutation was enough to transport a soul to Paradise, and how heaven and earth grew dim with sympathy when she shed a tear. Not Laura herself was worshipped in such superlative sort, for Petrarch was not young, nor had he that superb simplicity of self-consciousness, that intense individuality, which could thus make itself the centre of a whole world, colouring the universe and shaping it into accord with his ruling mood.

The tale is so true that Florence herself, in the ancient form she then

wore, rises before us, not like any city the world ever saw, yet with a dream-reality which no one can doubt; and we stand by and are spectators in those strange assemblies to which Beatrice's lover went to have sight of her, and seeing her afar off, amid the circle of ladies, was rapt in a mystic heaven of delight, or even swooned with longing to approach her, or fear of her displeasure, yet never ventured upon a word to her so far as he dares say; or stand with him by the doors, and hear the ladies talk together who come and go from visiting her in sorrow, till our hearts are wrung like his by the thought that even peerless Beatrice, like others, must sometimes weep. Yet this intense truth of feeling, and the strange reality of the picture at once so dim and so dazzling, make the fantastic unreality of the whole only more apparent to us, in its strange artificial framework, conventional to the quaintest extent of mediæval conventionality, though so fiery-true. The sonnets, with their explanations, throw the most curious light upon the whole mental existence of the time. How elaborate they are, made a solemn business of in all the fantastical sublimation of their sentiments, mapped out line by line, lest anyone should miss the meaning, with transparent pretences at obscurity, which give the young poet an excuse for lingering over and interpreting, and caressing his own verse! This was his *Vita Nuova*, the new sweet life which was revealed to him apart from the common existence which he had by nature. No doubt this dream-world in which Beatrice was queen, and through which moved very softly with sympathetic looks and low-voiced questions the "ladies who have intelligence in love," was jostled by a rude enough real world, a life which looked old and stale and common in the young man's glowing eyes. He ignores that existence which to later spectators appears the most important; puts out of sight his studies, his preparations for the public service, his sharp taste of the excitement of war at Campaldino and elsewhere, and all the trade and bustle, the broils and commotions, that were going on in Florence. Historians would have preferred that outside life of facts; and a great many even who are not historians would rather have known how other matters were going, how Guido Cavalcanti got drawn to the side of the Cerchi, and whether Foresè Donati and the gentle Piccarda were afraid of that arrogant brother Corso, whom popular wit called Baron Do-me-harm. But no—the *Vita Nuova* entrances the young poet into a charmed circle. There the ladies stand about in groups, and talk of him and his devotion, and speak softly to him, turning gentle eyes upon the love-sick youth; and his friends answer him in sympathetic sonnets, and all the world breathes a melancholy melodious echo of the names of Love and Beatrice. Not a harsh thought, not an evil impulse, not a stir of jealousy or look of envy—nothing that is not as pure and sweet as it is visionary, is in the fantastic-delicious record. Every woman in it, and women are its chief inhabitants, is a *gentildonna*, stately and spotless and pitiful; every man is chivalrous and [pure]. It is all of love; but the love is of angelic purity, elevated

above all the alloy of fleshly passion. It is fantastic as a novel of Boccaccio, but spotless as a dream of heaven.*

And now to return to the story: here is Dante's own description of the first meeting with Beatrice recorded above:—

Her dress on that day was a most noble colour, a subdued and goodly crimson, girdled and adorned in such sort as best suited with her very tender age. At that moment I say most truly that the spirit of life which hath its dwelling in the secretest chamber of the heart, began to tremble so violently that the least pulses of my body shook therewith, and in trembling it said these words: *Ecce Deus fortior me, qui vincens dominabitur mihi.* . . . From that time Love ruled my soul which was so early espoused to him, and began to take such security of sway over me by the strength which was given to him by my imagination that it was necessary for me to do completely all his pleasure. He commanded me often that I should endeavour to see this so youthful angel, and I saw in her such noble and praiseworthy deportment that truly of her might be said these words of the poet Homer: 'She appeared to be born not of mortal man, but of God.'

After nine years (which mystic number, magical combination of threes, has much to do with the pathetical-fantastic narrative) the boy-lover once more saw that youngest of angels. It is not to be supposed that they had not met many a time between, at kirk and market, or that he had not watched her from that corner long called the *Nicchia*, or niche of Dante, in some massive angle of the thick walls of Portinari's house, flitting across the courtyard, or through the narrow street. But it suits the romancer to leap over this mystical interval of nine years, during which it would appear no words but only looks had passed between him and his goddess; and the next point in the tale is the miraculous moment in which she first spoke to him. The description of *questa gentilissima* has here as always the same mingling of intense reality and dreamlike, glorified dimness, the minutely recorded circumstances aiding somehow to perfect the shadowy character of the vision.

When so many days had passed that nine years were nearly fulfilled . . . this wonderful creature appeared to me, in white robes, between two gentle ladies who were older than she; and passing by the street, she turned her eyes towards the place where I stood in great timidity, and in her ineffable courtesy saluted me so graciously that I seemed then to see the heights of all blessedness. And because this was the first time that her words came to my ears, it was so sweet to me that, like one intoxicated, I left all my companions, and, retiring to the solitary refuge of my chamber, I set myself to think of that most courteous one (*questa cortesissima*), and thinking of her there fell upon me a sweet sleep, in which a marvellous vision appeared to me.

The dream which he had is thus described:—He saw Love carrying in one arm a sleeping lady, in the other hand a burning heart, with which when he had woken the sleeper he fed her, notwithstanding her terror—then vanished so weeping that the dreamer too woke. The lady was Beatrice, the flaming heart was that of Dante. When the youth woke, what

* The English reader who does not know Italian enough to read this wonderful book in the original, will find a very good translation by Mr. Dante Rossetti, in the volume entitled *The Circle of Dante*.

could he do but put the vision into verse, a manner of speech which already his glowing soul had learned? This was irresistible; but the manner in which he did it was of his time and not of ours; it belongs to the age of the troubadours, to that early singing time of new-born poetry, when there went on a sweet commerce and rivalry between the professors of the young art, most delicious of all the inventions of man. Here is how Dante himself describes his next step in that new life:—

Thinking of this which had appeared to me, I proposed to make it known to many who were famous *trovatores* in that time; and because it so happened that I had already found out for myself the art of telling my meaning in verse, I proposed to make a sonnet, in which I should salute all the faithful followers of love, and praying them to give their opinion of my vision, write to them an account of that which in my sleep I had seen. . . . This sonnet was answered by many, and in different ways, among whom one replied whom I call the first of my friends, in a sonnet which begins "Vedeste al mio parer ogni valore." And this was the beginning of the friendship between him and me when he knew that it was I who had sent that first sonnet to him.

The other troubadour, who answered the boy's sonnet and became the first of Dante's friends, was Guido Cavalcanti, of whom mention has already been made, and whose name is associated with the beautiful passage in the *Inferno* which we have quoted. He was one of the best endowed of those singers who preceded Dante, and to the son of the burgher Alighieri, who belonged at best to the *petite noblesse*, and besides was but a boy, eighteen years old, the notice and friendship of this splendid cavalier, knight, and minstrel, a mature man and recognised poet, must have been very important, as well as very sweet and flattering. They were friends henceforward as long as Guido's life lasted—friends so close and intimate that the poet felt himself entitled to make old Cavalcanti start from his burning tomb at the sound of his name, looking for the inseparable companion who on that great journey was not with him. It is but little more that we know of this noble Guido. He appears in the traditions and histories of his time always in an interesting and attractive light, but with few details. He was "a gentle, courteous, and ardent youth," says Dino Campagni, "but disdainful (*sdegnoso*) and solitary, and intent on study." "Besides this he was one of the best lawyers in the world," adds Boccaccio, "and an excellent natural philosopher; he was lively and gracious, and loved to talk (*parlante huomo*), and anything that he wished to do which was becoming to a gentleman he could do better than any other man; and besides this he was very rich. . . . But because Guido sometimes in his speculations became very abstracted among men, and because he to some degree held the doctrines of the Epicureans, it was said by the vulgar that his speculations were all made with the hope of finding that there was no God." Whether this reproach was true or not cannot now be decided; but the *animoso sdegnoso* appears in some of the stories told of him, and specially in that one of Boccaccio's novels where he is represented as leaping scornfully over one of the sarcophagi which surrounded San Giovanni, in order to escape from a band of revellers.

who were persuading him to join them, telling them that they in their uselessness and folly were at home there among the dead, while he, "solitary and intent on study," belonged to the living. Guido was married to the daughter of Farinata degli Uberti, the great Ghibelline chief, whom Dante associates with the elder Cavalcanti in the *Inferno*—one of those marriages so continually recurring in mediæval times by which wisdom laboured, for the most part ineffectually, to make an end of, or at least soften, the virulence of faction. Either for this reason, or because his "disdainful" mind got weary of too rigid adherence to the party in which he had been born, Guido, Guelf by origin, joined that party of Bianchi who inclined towards the doctrines of Ghibellinism, otherwise all but extinct in Florence, and drew Dante with him into it—a very momentous result of their friendship. Perhaps also because of this state-marriage Guido seems to have been somewhat light of love, the names of two ladies, Giovanna and Mandetta, being associated with his, neither of them, it is to be supposed, his Ghibelline wife. Giovanna, however, at least must have been a *gentildonna*, an object of pure and chivalrous adoration, since we find her in the society of the spotless Beatrice among those lovely visionary groups of the *Vita Nuova*, which was written specially, as the poet afterwards informs us, for the use of Guido, the first of his friends.

Others of the best-known *trovatori* of the time, those poets whose songs were sung about the streets when all Florence danced and sang the sweet May in, and nothing but delights were heard of—replied to the young Alighieri's verses, some of them, in lighter mood, laughing at him and his vision; but from this period it is evident the popular knowledge of him as a poet began. We can trace him only through a few of the transports, now joyful, now melancholy, of his love-life. One scene, all thrilling with sensations ineffable, love agonies and languishments beyond the reach of words, occurs to our own recollection in which the young poet appears to us faint and trembling, leaning against a fresco which went round the walls of the house, so confused by the sudden sight of his lady among the other *gentile donne* present that he had no longer any strength in him. He had been brought to this assembly, whatever its purpose was—a marriage feast apparently—by one of his friends. "To what end are we come among these ladies?" he had said. "To the end that they may be worthily served," said the other—Guido perhaps, for the words are full of chivalrous grace. It is supposed by many commentators that this was one of the feastings which celebrated the marriage of Beatrice herself, and that this fact accounts for Dante's extraordinary emotion, his confusion of mind, and the tears which he was unable to conceal. But if it is so, it is the only reference in the whole mystical record to that event which, had his love been an ordinary love, would have involved the very bitterness of death to so true a lover. But, while this is passed over, the fact that Beatrice, hearing, it is supposed, evil tales of him, withdrew from her habit of recognising Dante when she met him, is fully recorded, with all the grievous solemnity which befits such

an event. Here is a curious little scene, displaying the disconsolate lover among his sympathisers, which is full of the characteristic atmosphere of the story :—

As by the mere sight of me many persons had understood my secret, certain ladies who were in the habit of meeting, in consequence of the great delight they took in each other's society, knew well my heart, for some of them had been present at my misfortunes. And I, musing near them (for so fortune arranged it), was called by one of these gentle ladies. The lady who called me was very animated in conversation ; so that when I came to this group and perceived that my own most gentle lady was not among them, I was emboldened, and, saluting her, asked, " What is your pleasure ? " There were many ladies present, and some of them laughed among themselves; but others looked at me, waiting for what I should say, and others again talked with each other. Then one, turning her eyes towards me, called me by name and said these words: " To what end lovest thou this thy lady, since thou canst not endure her presence, for certainly the end of such a love should be a great novelty ? " And when she had said this, not only she but all the others began to look at me waiting for my answer. Then I said, " Madonna, all that I looked for as the end of my love was the greeting of that lady, perhaps, of whom you speak; and in this was all my happiness, the object of all my good desires. But since it pleases her to deny me this greeting, my lord Love, in his mercy, has placed all my happiness in that which cannot be taken from me." Then these ladies began to talk together among themselves; and as one sees rain falling mingled with beautiful snow, thus I seemed to see their words mingled with sighs. And when they had thus talked among themselves, the lady who first spoke to me said these words: " We pray thee tell us in what thy happiness now stands ? " And I replied, " In the words which praise my lady ;" and she replied, " If the words thou sayest are true, thou shouldst have acted differently." And I, musing on these words, abashed went away from them, saying to myself, " Since there is so much blessedness in the words which celebrate my lady, why should other talk be mine ? " And thus I made up my mind to take for the subject of my words always that which should be to the praise of that very gentle one.

The image of the " rain mingled with beautiful snow," which he compared to the words and sighs of these *gentile donne*, is thoroughly Dantesque, and will remind the reader of many a similar similitude. He went away with his heart full, and breathed forth his address to the *Donne che arete intelletto d'amore*—after his fashion. He has always a cluster of these gentle ladies (a phrase which, however, does not express all the sweetness of the *gentildonna*) about him in the soft radiance of this strange love tale.

We may pause here, however, and turn a little to the ruder life outside of the *Vita Nuova*, yet going on all the same, without interruption, though without any such mystic record. Young Dante, though he would fain make us believe it, did not spend all his days singing nothing but the praises of Beatrice, speaking to none but those who had understanding in love, breaking his heart over the thought that his lady no longer recognised him when they met. Other incidents were in his life, rapt as it would seem in that sad ecstatic vision. While Beatrice was still living, at the very time perhaps when his heart was wrung to see her pass without sign or word, there occurred the battle of Campaldino, in which he was one of the *feditori*, literally "wounders," i. e. one of the band of volunteers who, according to the fashion of warfare common in

Italy, made the assault upon the enemy, thus turning every battle into a kind of deadly tournament, where the knights fought out the quarrel in presence of the humbler army which backed them on either side, but perhaps was not personally engaged at all. The fight in this case was between Arezzo and the combination of Ghibelline forces which had possession of that city, and Florence with her allies from all the Guelfic cities near. In this battle, where young Dante, at twenty-four, appears in the crowd only, we find all at once in full disclosure the two heads of the parties, not yet formed in Florence, which were to affect so fatally the poet's life—Vieri dei Cerchi, the future leader of the Bianchi, and Corso Donati, hereafter at the head of the Neri. At this moment, while neither Bianchi nor Neri yet existed, these two were both strenuously Guelf, like their city. Donati was a hot and arrogant noble, Cerchi a man of the people, risen into wealth and greatness, and making a house and name for his descendants. They were neighbours in that *sestiere*, near St. Martin's little church, near the house of the Alighieri, where Dante had grown under their shadow. They were great people, distinguished, one for nobility, the other for wealth, towering in public importance and grandeur far above the youth who roamed through the neighbouring streets thinking of Beatrice; but how entirely they owe their recollection now, to such entanglement as good fortune permitted them, with the poet's name! The *feditori* were selected by the captains of each district from the volunteers who presented themselves. Vieri dei Cerchi was captain of his *sesto*, and he had hurt his leg, and had therefore a complete excuse for exemption; but instead of taking advantage of this, he at once placed himself, his son, and his nephews at the head of the list, an act which gained him great reputation (*grande pregio*), says the old chronicler. He was at the head of the assailing knights on the Florentine side, and with his son by his side made great proof of valour. His rival, Corso Donati, who was at the time *podestà* of Pistoia, was at the head of the reserve, under orders to hold apart and refrain from fighting, at peril of their heads. "But," says old Villani, more moved by the valour than by the disobedience to orders, "when he saw the battle begin, he said, like a valiant knight, 'If we lose, I will die in the fight with my fellow-citizens; and if we win, whosoever would condemn me, let him come to Pistoia and do it;'" and freely set himself in motion with his band, and fell upon the enemy's flank, and was greatly the occasion of their rout." Dante was too young and too unimportant as yet to take any such leading part, but he has left a record of the fight not less graphic. "At the battle of Campaldino," he says, "when the Ghibelline party were almost all killed and destroyed, I was present, not a novice in arms; and there had much fear, and afterwards very great delight in the various occurrences of the battle." A man who confesses to having had *temenza molto* did his part like a man, we may be sure, among the *feditori*, under the leadership of Messer Vieri, the advanced guard and first rank in the fight. Dante was also present, as he proves by using it as an illustration

of his great poem, at the siege of Ciprona, the only other incident in this brief campaign.

The world outside the *Vita Nuova* was indeed a troubrous world, out of which a young lover might well be fain to take refuge among the gentildonnas and the trovatores of mystical romance. In this same year when Beatrice's sad adorer proved his manhood, and felt at once much fear and the fierce delight of battle at Campaldino, the key was turned in the door of that "horrible tower" at Pisa, where Count Ugolino and his children perished so miserably. The story was in all men's mouths, and no doubt inspired the arms of the conquering Guelfs against the Ghibellines who had done it, when, a month or two afterwards, Florence met Arezzo in the field. Another tragedy, with which politics had nothing to do, the pitiful story of Francesca di Rimini, came to its conclusion a little later. Thus the wildest of passions were raging, the most terrible events happening. But there is no trace of them in the dream-world to which the young poet returned after these scenes of blood and fierce excitement. Not a sign of Campaldino, or of the previous events which had left him "not a novice in arms," appears in the record of his other existence. There no factions or fightings enter, but Love is lord of all, and Beatrice exercises a gentle sway which even the people in the streets acknowledge. "This most gentle lady was in so great favour with all, that when she passed in the streets everyone ran to see her. And when she approached anyone, so much was his heart touched that he did not dare to raise his eyes nor to answer her greeting. And she, crowned and clothed with humility, went on her way, showing no pride in that which she saw and heard. And many said when she had passed, 'This is not a woman, but one of the most beautiful angels of heaven.'"* The air is still as in a vision; the common mortals stand and gaze with bated breath, while, stately stepping through the old-world streets, that most gentle one, *questa gentilissima*, "crowned and clothed with humility," goes upon her way. Strange haven of poetic rest among the fierce contentions of the time, magical heart-existence, abstract and wonderful, in the midst of the tumultuous and cruel day!

But, alas! even now it had come into the poet's mind, amid deepest thoughts of life's burdens and miseries, that one time or other even the *gentilissima* Beatrice must die. He had, indeed, written in a sonnet, with more than usual trembling of heart, how the angels had asked God for her, but how the Almighty had pitifully left her for a little "there, where one is who expects to lose her." This anticipated blow fell in the summer of the year 1290, the year after Campaldino. Suddenly the lingering record of the *Vita Nuova* interrupts itself. There is a pause, a broken

* The reader who knows Italy will possibly be reminded of the charming little complimentary speeches, absolutely free from impertinence or intrusion, which the common people in the streets still make, with national grace and frankness, when anything beautiful passes them, child or woman, and in which the most sensitive could not find any offence.

line ; and then a sudden change of style and language. The poet, at an end of all his sonnets, finds in an older lamentation than his own the sublime words that fit best his sudden desolation :—

“ How doth the city sit solitary that was full of people ! How is she become a widow, she that was great among nations ! ”

It is thus that he heads the later part of the record after the death of Beatrice. He heard of the event in the middle of one of those tender compositions which were all in her honour. “ I was still in the making of this canzone, and had completed only the above verse, when the Lord of that most gentle one, the Lord of justice, called that noble lady to be glorified under the banner of that blessed queen the Virgin Mary, whose name was ever held in the highest reverence by this blessed Beatrice.” Strength and words fail him to add anything to this sad statement. The sudden tottering of reason, which is natural to a man dazed and bewildered by such a calamity, seems to come over him ; and he falls to babbling, yet with all the intensity of his ardent soul, about the number nine which regulated this lovely concluded life—the perfect nine, conjunct of threes, which signified “ that at her birth all these nine heavens were at perfect unity with each other.” In their ninth year the two had met ; nine years after they had spoken ; she died on the ninth day of the month, and the ninetieth year of the century. “ This number was her own self, that is to say, by similitude.” Most strange mixture of the truest genuine sentiment with the passing follies of an artificial age ; and yet the one as characteristic of the great poet as was the other—a truly human jumble, pathetic in its foolishness as in its love.

The *Vita Nuova* all but ends here in a confused record of studies, taken up in the restlessness of sorrow ; but does not quite end—for there is a curious little postscriptal episode describing how near Dante was to finding consolation in the sweet sympathetic looks of *una gentildonna, giovane e bella molto*, who looked at him from her window, and gave him unconscious comfort. This was two years and a half after Beatrice’s death, yet he blames himself for having permitted these sweet looks to become too dear to him, and has much discussion with himself on the subject, which ends, however, with a dream, in which Beatrice appears to him, calling back to herself all his thoughts. Then he seeks consolation in philosophy and religion ; and finally the record ends as follows :—

Then there appeared to me a wonderful vision ; in which I saw things which made me resolve not to speak more of this blessed one, until the time should come when I could speak of her more worthily. And to arrive at this I study as much as I can, as she truly knows ; so that if it pleases Him by whom all things live that my life should continue for a time, I hope to say of her that which has not yet been spoken of anyone. And after, may it please Him who is the Lord of courtesy that my soul may see the glory of my lady, that blessed Beatrice, who gloriously beholds His face, *qui est per omnia saecula benedictus. Laus Deo.*

This is the conclusion of the most wonderful picture of a young man’s love and dreamy experience of youth which the world has ever seen.

We do not know where to lay our hand upon anything at all resembling it. Shakespeare's sonnets had no such unity of meaning, not even could the critics manage to settle at all what their meaning was, and there is nothing in them but poetical beauty which suggests the comparison. Dante stands by himself in this passionate, elaborate tale, so simple in its transparent artifices, so full of the self-preoccupation of youth, so taken up with that *pose* of passion of which the young *trovatore* was proud—yet at the same time so full of genuine devotion and fantastical visionary love. If there is some alloy in the adoration of Beatrice consequent on the elevation thereby of Beatrice's lover, it is at least alloy of a noble kind, the pride that soars with its goddess, not that which essays to pluck her down. And with all its art and affectations, those affectations so threaded through with the intense reality of the man that they look more genuine than the deepest sincerity of many another, the *Vita Nuova* will always be dear to those who love Dante, and interesting far above the interest of many a more reliable production to the students of literature and of his time.

Many commentators have benevolently hoped, perhaps on slender grounds, that the *gentildonna* whom he saw at her window, and whose pitiful looks so consoled him, was Gemma Donati whom he married. There is no evidence for this, nor any evidence against it, so that the reader if he pleases may indulge in the thought. For as the other life outside had gone on roughly all the time through boyish studies and youthful dissipations and gay company and sharp fighting, alongside of the mystic poetic existence of the *Vita Nuova*, so it continued when that sweet chapter was closed; and some time in 1298, about the time when the record closes with his resolution to abandon all thoughts of the *gentildonna consolatrice*, and to give himself up to the memory of Beatrice and to the "wondrous vision" in which he should speak of her, as no one else had ever been spoken of—he was married to poor Gemma, whom no one has ever celebrated, but who seems to have been a faithful wife to him, in the little church of St. Martin opposite. At the very time of the marriage his mind must have been already full of those first cantos of his great poem in which Beatrice is the inspiring centre, the more than goddess; and it is to be hoped, for her own sake, that Madonna Gemma—if it was she who looked at him so tenderly from her window and almost charmed away his grief—was one of those simple souls so absorbed in unselfish affection as to make no attempt to judge its object or enquire into the return he makes. She has had the usual share of posthumous abuse which is the common fate of a great man's silent wife, and is quite gratuitously classed with that Xantippe who probably was as innocent as she. No contemporary historian says a word either for or against her; and the instinctive impulse to blame the wife for much that happens to the man is so strong that we are bound in fairness to conclude that there was nothing to say. Boccaccio objects to marriage at all for such a man. "Let philosophers leave marriage to rich fools, to noblemen, and to labourers," says the old story-writer, "and let them delight themselves with Philo-

sophy, who is a much better bride than any other ;" but he says not a word against the voiceless Gemma. She was of a family much more elevated than Dante's, and one which he was evidently proud to be connected with—and two of her near relations figure in his great poem ; one of them, Forese, is in the *Purgatory*, where he is expiating his love of good cheer—an innocent vice among so many worse—and the other, Piccarda, is found in the Paradise itself. " *Oh dolce frate*," Forese says to Dante, " what wouldst thou that I should tell thee ?" Therefore it is evident that this could not be the Forese Donati resurrected and torn above ground by some of the darkling moles who are for ever at work upon Dante, as an enemy of the poet, the author of some halting and virulent verses addressed to him. We are not even told what was the relationship between Gemma and these two, but probably it was not distant ; and as all the members of a family lived together in and about the central palace of the head of the house, there can be little doubt that all these young Donati had known the poet from his cradle, neighbours as they were. Very likely they were all together at that May-day feast in Folco Portinari's house, when the child Dante first loved the child Beatrice, and had known him also, and known of that wonderful innocent Platonic and poetic devotion of his. If Gemma was the lady of the window, no doubt her soft eyes had followed him, in the fanciful, tender sympathy of youth, while still Beatrice lived, and the glory of the young *trovatore*'s exalted passion, filled all the *vicinato*, where the old people would smile at him, but all the young understand and envy and revere. Perhaps even, being younger, she too shared in his adoration for their beautiful neighbour, with that enthusiasm of girl's worship which is so often bestowed first upon a woman before it becomes love and finds its natural end. When we hear that one of Gemma's children was called Beatrice, we find this hypothesis doubly probable. She had seven children, poor soul !—in the seven years of her marriage ; and after that saw her illustrious exile no more. Such is the little record of Gemma, of whom nobody had a word to say until all personal recollection had departed from the world—when, and not till then, wanton biographists assailed her with those unprovoked and unfounded slanders which so often are the fate of faithful women. There is no evidence whatever that she deserved any one of them. To Dante probably she was but the useful housewife, for whom a quiet, secondary, tame affection suffices ; but even this cannot be affirmed, since if she was the *gentildonna* of the *Vita Nuova* there are as beautiful things said of her, of her sweet looks and tender pity, as any woman could desire. But the dream-world was at an end when the young Alighieri led his bride across the stony street from little St. Martin's opposite, and no more knowledge of his love, save in the sanctified, celestial way of poetry, is given to us. His spiritual life was to stray henceforward through regions more wondrous than those dazzling dream-streets of the old city ; and the stronger life, with its deeper problems, surged in and swallowed up the delicate strain which had made the charm of his youth.

"You can't tell Christopher what you've done with your
hands without him to be your master," said Sol, "and I have
seen a good many of them now, and I don't think you've got
any thing to be ashamed of."

The Hand of Ethelberta.

CHAPTER XVI.

A TURNPIKE ROAD.



"Be thinking of coming to London ourselves
soon," said Sol, a carpenter and joiner by
trade, as he walked along at Christopher's
left hand. "There's so much more chance
for a man up the country. Now, if you
was me, how should you set about getting
a job, sir?"

"What can you do?" said Christopher.

"Well, I am a very good staircase
hand; and I have been called neat at sash-
frames; and I can knock together doors
and shutters very well; and I can do a
little at the cabinet-making. I don't mind
framing a roof, neither, if the rest be busy;
and I am always ready to fill up my time
at planing floor-boards by the foot."

"And I can mix and lay flat tints,"
said Dan, who was a house-painter, "and
pick out mouldings, and grain in every
kind of wood you can mention—oak, maple,
walnut, satin-wood, cherry-tree—"

"You can both do too much to stand
the least chance of being allowed to do anything in a city, where limitation
is all the rule in labour. To have any success, Sol, you must be a man
who can thoroughly look at a door to see what ought to be done to it,
but as to looking at a window, that's not your line; or a person who, to
the remotest particular, understands turning a screw, but who does not
profess any knowledge of how to drive a nail. Dan must know how to
paint blue to a marvel, but must be quite in the dark about painting
green. If you stick to some such principle of specialty as this, you may
get employment in London."

"Ha-ha-ha!" said Dan, striking at a stone in the road with the
stout green hazel he carried. "A wink is as good as a nod: thank'e—
we'll mind all that now."

"If we do come," said Sol, "we shall not mix up with Mrs. Pether-
win at all."



"GOODNESS! HOW QUICK YOU WERE!"

" Oh, indeed ! "

" Oh, no. (Perhaps you think it odd that we call her ' Mrs. Petherwin,' but that's by agreement as safer and better than Berta, because we be such rough chaps you see, and she's so lofty.) ' Twould demean her to claim kin wi' her in London—two journeymen like we, that know nothing besides our trades."

" Not at all," said Christopher, by way of chiming in in the friendliest manner. " She would be pleased to see any straightforward honest man and brother, I should think, notwithstanding that she has moved in other society for a time."

" Ah, you don't know Berta ! " said Dan, looking as if he did.

" How—in what way do you mean ? " said Christopher uneasily.

" So lofty—so very lofty ! Isn't she, Sol. Why she'll never stir out from mother's till after dark, and then her day begins ; and she'll traipse about under the trees, and never go into the high road, so that nobody in the way of gentlepeople shall run up against her and know her living in such a little small hut after biding in a big mansion-place. There, we don't find fault wi' her about it : we like her just the same, though she don't speak to us in the street ; for a feller must be a fool to make a piece of work about a woman's pride, when 'tis his own sister, and hang upon her and bother her when he knows 'tis for her good that he should not. Yes, her life has been quare enough. I hope she enjoys it, but for my part I like plain sailing. None of your ups and downs for me. There, I suppose 'twas her nater to want to look into the world a bit."

" Father and mother kept Berta to school, you understand, sir," explained the moré thoughtful Sol, " because she was such a quick child, and they always had a notion of making a governess of her. Sums ? If you said to that child, ' Berta, 'leven-pence-three-farthings a day, how much a year ? ' she would tell'ee in three seconds out of her own little head. And that hard sum about the herrings she had done afore she was nine."

" True, she had," said Dan. " And we all know that to do that is to do something that's no nonsense."

" What is the sum ? " Christopher enquired.

" What—not know the sum about the herrings ? " said Dan, spreading his gaze all over Christopher in amazement.

" Never heard of it," said Christopher.

" Why down in these parts, just as you try a man's soul by the Ten Commandments, you try his head by that there sum—hey, Sol ? "

" Ay, that we do."

" A herring and half for three-half-pence, how many can ye get for 'levenpence : that's the feller ; and a mortel teaser he is, I assure 'ee. Our parson, who's not altogether without fun o'week days, said one afternoon, ' If humour can be found in the multiplication-table at all, Chickarel, 'tis in connection with that sum.' Well, Berta was so clever in arithmetic that she was asked to teach summing at Miss Courtley's, and there she got to like foreign tongues more than ciphering, and at last she hated

ciphering, and took to books entirely. Mother and we were very proud of her at that time: not that we be stuck-up people at all—be we, Sol?"

"Not at all; nobody can say that we be that, though there's more of it in the country than there should be by all account."

"You'd be surprised to see how vain the girls about here be getting. Little rascals, why they won't curtsey to the loftiest lady in the land; no, not if you were to pay 'em to do it. Now, the men be different. Any man will touch his hat for a pint of beer. But then, of course, there's some difference between the two. Touching your hat is a good deal less to do than bending your knees, as Berta used to say, when she was blowed up for not doing it. She was always one of the independent sort—you never seed such a maid as she was! Now, Picotee was quite the other way."

"Has Picotee left Sandbourne?"

"Oh no; she is home for the holidays. Well, Mr. Julian, our road parts from yours just here, unless you walk into Anglebury along with us. But I suppose you get across to this station, and go by rail?"

"I am obliged to go that way for my portmanteau," said Christopher, "or I should have been pleased to walk. Shall I see you in the town to-morrow? I hope so."

"Well, no. 'Tis hardly likely that you will see us—hardly. We know how unpleasant it is for a high sort of man to have rough chaps like us hailing him, so we think it best not to meet you—thank you all the same. So if you should run up against us in the street, we should be much obliged by yer taking no notice, if you wouldn't mind? 'Twill save so much awkwardness—being in our working clothes. 'Tis always the plan that Mrs. Petherwin and we agree to act upon, and we find it best for both. I hope you take our meaning right, and as no offence, Mr. Julian?"

"And do you do the same with Picotee?"

"Oh Lord, no—'tisn't a bit of use to try. That's the worst of Picotee—there's no getting rid of her. The more in the rough we be the more she'll stick to us; and if we say she sha'n't come, she'll bide and fret about it till we be forced to let her."

Christopher laughed, and promised, on condition that they would retract the statement about their not being proud; and then he wished his friends Good-night.

CHAPTER XVII.

AN INNER ROOM AT THE LODGE.

AT the lodge at this time a discussion of some importance was going on. The scene was Mrs. Chickerel's bedroom, to which, unfortunately, she was confined by some spinal complaint; and here she now appeared as an interesting-faced woman of five-and-forty, properly dressed as far as visible, and propped up in a bed covered with a quilt which presented a

field of little squares in many tints, looking altogether like a bird's-eye-view of a market-garden.

Mrs. Chickerel had been nurse in a nobleman's family until her marriage, and after that she played the part of wife and mother upon the whole affectionately and well. Among her minor differences with her husband had been one about the naming of the children: a matter that was at last compromised by an agreement under which the choice of the girls' names became her prerogative, and that of the boys' her husband's, who limited his field of selection to strict historical precedent as a set-off to Mrs. Chickerel's tendency to stray into the regions of romance.

The only grown-up daughters at home, Ethelberta and Picotee, with their brother Joey, were sitting near her; the two youngest children, Georgina and Myrtle, who had been strutting in and out of the room, and otherwise endeavouring to walk, talk, and speak like the gentleman just gone away, were packed off to bed. Emmeline, of that transitional age which causes the bearer to look wistfully at the sitters when romping and at the rompers when sitting, uncertain whether her position in the household is that of child or woman, was idling in a corner. The two absent brothers and two absent sisters—eldest members of the family—completed the round ten whom Mrs. Chickerel with thoughtless readiness had presented to a crowded world, to cost Ethelberta many wakeful hours at night while she revolved schemes how they might be decently maintained.

"I still think," Ethelberta was saying, "that the plan I first proposed is the best. I am convinced that it will not do to attempt to keep on the Lodge. If we are all together in town, I can look after you much better than when you are far away from me down here."

"Shall we not interfere with you—your plans for keeping up your connections?" enquired her mother, glancing up towards Ethelberta by lifting the flesh of her forehead, instead of troubling to raise her face altogether.

"Not nearly so much as by staying here."

"But," said Picotee, "if you let lodgings, won't the gentlemen and ladies know it?"

"I have thought of that," said Ethelberta, "and this is how I shall manage. In the first place, if mother is there, the lodgings can be let in her name, all bills will be receipted by her, and all tradesmen's orders will be given as from herself. Then, we will take no English lodgers at all; we will advertise the rooms only in Continental newspapers, as suitable for a French or German gentleman or two, and by this means there will be little danger of my acquaintance discovering that my house is not entirely a private one, or of any lodger being a friend of my acquaintance. I have thought over every possible way of combining the dignified social position I must maintain to make my story-telling attractive, with my absolute lack of money, and I can see no better one."

"Then if Gwendoline is to be your cook, she must soon give notice at her present place?"

"Yes. Everything depends upon Gwendoline and Cornelia. But there is time enough for them to give notice—Christmas will be soon enough. If they cannot or will not come as cook and housemaid, I am afraid the plan will break down. A vital condition is that I do not have a soul in the house (beyond the lodgers) who is not one of my own relations. When we have put Joey into buttons, he will do very well to attend to the door."

"But s'pose," said Joey, after a glassy look at his future appearance in the position alluded to, "that any of your gentlepeople come to see ye, and when I opens the door and lets 'em in a swinging big lodger stalks downstairs. What will 'em think? Up will go their eyeglasses at one another till she glares each other into holes. My gracious!"

"The one who calls will only think that another visitor is leaving, Joey. But I shall have no visitors, or very few. I shall let it be well known among my late friends that my mother is an invalid, and that on this account we receive none but the most intimate friends. These intimate friends not existing, we receive nobody at all."

"Except Sol and Dan, if they get a job in London? They'll have to call upon us at the back door, won't they, Berta?" said Joey.

"There is no back door; they must go down the area steps. But they will not mind that; they like the idea."

"And father, too—must he go down the steps?"

"He may come whichever way he likes. He will be glad enough to have us near at any price. I know that he is not at all happy at leaving you down here, and he away in London. You remember that he has only taken the situation at Mr. Doncastle's on the supposition that you all come to town as soon as he can see an opening for getting you there; and as nothing of the sort has offered itself to him, this will be the very thing. Of course, if I succeed wonderfully well in my schemes for story-tellings, readings of my ballads and poems, lectures on the art of versification, and what not, we need have no lodgers; and then we shall all be living a happy family—all taking our share in keeping the establishment going."

"Except poor me!" sighed the mother.

"My dear mother, you will be necessary as a steady power—a fly-wheel, in short, to the concern. I wish that father could live there, too."

"He'll never give up his present way of life—it has grown to be a part of his nature. Poor man, he never feels at home, except in somebody else's house, and is nervous and quite a stranger in his own. Sich is the fatal effects of service!"

"Oh mother, don't!" said Ethelberta tenderly, but with her teeth on edge; and Picotee curled up her toes, fearing that her mother was going to moralize.

"Well, what I mean is, that your father would not like to live upon your earnings, and so forth. But in town we shall be near him—that's one thing, certainly."

"And I shall not be wanted at all," said Picotee, in a melancholy tone.

"It is much better for you to stay where you are," her mother said. "You will come and spend the holidays with us, of course, as you do now."

"I should like to live in London best," murmured Picotee, her head sinking mournfully to one side. "I hate being in Sandbourne now!"

"Nonsense!" said Ethelberta, severely. "We are all contriving how to live most comfortably, and it is by far the best thing for you to stay at the school. You used to be happy enough there."

Picotee sighed, and said no more.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A LARGE PUBLIC HALL.

It was the second week in February, Parliament had just met, and Ethelberta appeared for the first time before an audience in London.

There was some novelty in the species of entertainment that the active young woman had proposed to herself, and this doubtless had due effect in collecting the body of strangers who greeted her entry, over and above those friends who came to listen to her as a matter of course. Men and women who had become totally indifferent to new actresses, new readers, and new singers, once more felt the freshness of curiosity as they considered the promise of the announcement. But the chief inducement to attend lay in the fact that here was to be seen in the flesh a woman with whom the tongue of rumour had been busy in many romantic ways—a woman who, whatever else might be doubted, had certainly produced a volume of verse which had been the talk of the many who had read them, and of the many more who had not, for several consecutive weeks.

What was her story to be? Persons interested in the enquiry—a small proportion, it may be owned, of the whole London public, and chiefly young men—answered this question for themselves, by assuming that it would take the form of some pungent and gratifying revelation of the innermost events of her own life, from which her gushing lines had sprung as an inevitable consequence, and which being once known, would cause such musical poesy to appear no longer wonderful.

The front part of the room was well filled, rows of listeners showing themselves like a drilled-in crop of which not a seed has failed. They were listeners of the right sort, a majority having noses of the prominent dignified order, which when viewed in oblique perspective ranged as regularly as bow-windows at a watering-place. Ethelberta's plan was to tell her pretended history and adventures while sitting in a chair—as if she were at her own fireside, surrounded by a circle of friends. By this touch of domesticity a great appearance of truth and naturalness was given, though really the attitude was at first more difficult to maintain satisfactorily

than any one wherein stricter formality should be observed. She gently began her subject, as if scarcely knowing whether a throng were near her or not, and in her fear of seeming artificial spoke too low. This defect, however, she soon corrected, and ultimately went on in a charmingly colloquial manner. What Ethelberta relied upon soon became evident. It was not upon the intrinsic merits of her story as a piece of construction, but upon her method of telling it. Whatever defects the tale possessed—and they were not a few—it had, as delivered by her, the one pre-eminent merit of seeming like truth. A modern critic has well observed of Defoe that he had the most amazing talent on record for telling lies; and Ethelberta, in wishing her fiction to appear like a real narrative of personal adventure, did wisely to make Defoe her model. His is a style even better adapted for speaking than for writing, and the peculiarities of diction which he adopts to give verisimilitude to his narratives acquired enormous additional force when exhibited as *vivæ-voce* mannerisms. And although these artifices were not, perhaps, slavishly copied from that master of delusion, they would undoubtedly have reminded her hearers of him, had they not mostly been drawn from an easeful section in society which is especially characterized by the mental condition of knowing nothing about any author a week after they have read him. The few there who did remember Defoe were impressed by a fancy that his words greeted them anew in a winged auricular form, instead of by the weaker channels of print and eyesight. The reader may imagine what an effect this well-studied method must have produced when intensified by a clear living voice, animated action, and the brilliant and expressive eye of a handsome woman—attributes which of themselves almost compelled belief. When she reached the most telling passages, instead of adding exaggerated action and sound, Ethelberta would lapse to a whisper and a sustained stillness, which were more striking than gesticulation. All that could be done by art was there, and if inspiration was wanting nobody missed it.

It was in performing this feat that Ethelberta seemed first to discover in herself the full power of that self-command which further onward in her career more and more impressed her as a singular possession, until at last she was tempted to make of it many fantastic uses, leading to results that affected more households than her own. A talent for demureness under difficulties without the cold-bloodedness which renders such a bearing natural and easy, a face and hand reigning unmoved outside a heart by nature turbulent as a wave, is a constitutional arrangement much to be desired by people in general; yet, had Ethelberta been framed with less of that gift in her, her life might have been more comfortable as an experience, and brighter as an example, though perhaps duller as a story.

"Ladywell, how came this Mrs. Petherwin to think of such a queer trick as telling romances, after doing so well as a poet?" said a man in the stalls to his friend, who had been gazing at the Story-teller with a rapt face.

"What—don't you know?—everybody did, I thought," said the painter.

"A mistake. Indeed, I should not have come here at all, had I not heard the subject mentioned by accident yesterday at Grey's; and then I remembered her to be the same woman I had met at some place—Doncastle's I think it was—last year, when I thought her just getting on for handsome and clever, not to put it too strongly."

"Ah!—naturally you would not know much. Perhaps I am judging others by myself a little more than—but, as you have heard, she is an acquaintance of mine. I know her very well, and, in fact, I originally suggested the scheme to her as a pleasant way of adding to her fame. 'Depend upon it, dear Mrs. Petherwin,' I said, during a pause in one of our dances together some time ago, 'any public appearance of yours would be successful beyond description.'"

"Oh, I had no idea that you knew her so well! Then it is quite through you that she has adopted this course?"

"Well, not entirely—I could not say entirely. She said that some day, perhaps, she might do such a thing; and, in short, I reduced her vague ideas to form."

"I should not mind knowing her better—I must get you to throw us together in some way," said Neigh, with some interest. "I had no idea that you were such an old friend. You could do it, I suppose?"

"Really, I am afraid—hah-hah—may not have the opportunity of obliging you. I met her at Wyndway, you know, where she was visiting with Lady Petherwin. It was some time ago, and I cannot say that I have ever met her since."

"Or before?" said Neigh.

"Well—no; I never did."

"Ladywell, if I had half your power of going to your imagination for facts, I would be the greatest painter in England."

"Now, Neigh—that's too bad—hah-hah—but with regard to this matter, I do speak with some interest," said Ladywell, with a pleased sense of himself.

"In love with her?—Smitten down?—Done for?"

"Now, now! However, several other fellows chaff me about her. It was only yesterday that Jones said—"

"Do you know why she cares to do this sort of thing?"

"Merely a desire for fame, I suppose."

"I should think she has fame enough already."

"That I can express no opinion upon. I am thinking of getting her permission to use her face in a subject I am preparing. It is a fine face for canvas. Glorious contour—glorious. Ah, here she is again, for the second part."

"Dream on, young fellow. You'll make a rare couple!" said Neigh with a flavour of superciliousness unheeded by his occupied companion.

Further back in the room were a pair of faces whose keen interest in

the performance contrasted much with the languidly permissive air of those in front. When the ten-minutes break occurred, Christopher was the first of the two to speak. "Well, what do you think of her, Faith?" he said, shifting restlessly on his seat.

"I like the quiet parts of the tale best, I think," replied the sister; "but, of course, I am not a good judge of these things. How still the people are at times! I continually take my eyes from her to look at the listeners. Did you notice the fat old lady in the second row, with her cloak a little thrown back? She was absolutely unconscious, and stayed with her face up and lips parted like a little child of six."

"She well may: the thing is a triumph. That fellow Ladywell is here, I believe—yes, it is he, busily talking to the man on his right. If I were a woman, I would rather go donkey-driving than stick myself up there, for gaping fops to quiz and say what they like about! But she had no choice, poor thing; for it was that or nothing with her."

Faith, who had secret doubts about the absolute necessity of Ethelberta's appearance in public, said, with remote meanings, "Perhaps it is not altogether a severe punishment to her to be looked at by well-dressed men. Suppose she feels it as a blessing, instead of an affliction?"

"She is a different sort of woman, Faith, and so you would say if you knew her. Of course, it is natural for you to criticise her severely just now, and I don't wish to defend her."

"I think you do a little, Kit."

"No; I am indifferent about it all. Perhaps it would have been better for me if I had never seen her; and possibly it might have been better for her if she had never seen me. She has a heart, and the heart is a troublesome encumbrance when great things have to be done. I wish you knew her: I am sure you would like each other."

"Oh yes," said Faith, in a voice of rather weak conviction. "But, as we live in such a plain way, it would hardly be desirable at present."

Ethelberta being regarded, in common with the latest conjuror, spirit-medium, aéronaut, giant, dwarf, or monarch, as a new sensation, she was duly criticised in the morning papers, and even obtained a notice in some of the weekly reviews.

"A handsome woman," said one of these, "may have her own reasons for causing the flesh of the London public to creep upon its bones by her undoubtedly remarkable narrative powers; but we question if much good can result from such a form of entertainment. Nevertheless, some praise is due. We have had the novel-writer among us for some time, and the novel-reader has occasionally appeared on our platforms; but we believe that this is the first instance on record of a Novel-teller—one, that is to say, who relates professedly as fiction a romantic tale which has never been printed—the whole owing its chief interest to the method whereby the teller identifies herself with the leading character in the story."

Another observed: "When once we get away from the magic influence

of the story-teller's eye and tongue, we perceive how improbable, even impossible, is the tissue of events to which we have been listening with so great a sense of reality, and we feel almost angry with ourselves at having been the victims of such utter illusion."

"Mrs. Petherwin's personal appearance is decidedly in her favour," said another. "She affects no unconsciousness of the fact that form and feature are no mean vehicles of persuasion, and she uses the powers of each to the utmost. There spreads upon her face when in repose an air of innocence which is charmingly belied by the subtlety we discover beneath it when she begins her tale; and this amusing discrepancy between her physical presentment and the inner woman is further illustrated by the misgiving which seizes us on her entrance, that so impressionable a lady will never bear up in the face of so trying an audience.... The combinations of incident which Mrs. Petherwin persuades her bearers that she has passed through are not a little marvellous; and if what is rumoured be true, that the tales are to a great extent based upon her own experiences, she has proved herself to be no less daring in adventure than facile in her power of describing it."

CHAPTER XIX.

ETHELBERTA'S HOUSE.

AFTER such successes as these, Christopher could not forego the seductive intention of calling upon the poetess and romancer, at her now established town residence in Connaught Crescent. One wintry afternoon he reached the door—now for the third time—and gave a knock which had in it every tender refinement that could be thrown into the somewhat antagonistic vehicle of noise. Turning his face down the street as he waited restlessly on the step, he noticed how the glass of the street-lamps, the varnished back of a passing cab, a milk-woman's cans, and a row of church-windows, were all glaring in his eyes like new-rubbed copper; and on looking the other way beheld a bloody sun hanging among the chimneys at the upper end, as a danger-lamp to warn him off.

By this time the door was opened, and before him stood Ethelberta's young brother Joey, thickly populated with little buttons, the remainder of him consisting of invisible green.

"Ah, Joseph!" said Christopher, instantly recognising the boy. "What, are you here in office? Is your ——"

Joey lifted his forefinger and spread his mouth in a genial manner, as if to signify particular friendliness mingled with general caution.

"Yes, sir, Mrs. Petherwin is my mistress. I'll see if she is at home, sir," he replied, raising his shoulders and winking a wink of merry meanings by way of finish—all which signs showed, if evidence were wanted, how effectually this pleasant young page understood, though quite fresh from Wessex, the duties of his peculiar position. Mr. Julian was shown to the drawing-room, and there he found Ethelberta alone.

She gave him a hand so cool and still that Christopher, much as he desired the contact, was literally ashamed to let her see and feel his own, trembling with unmanageable excess of feeling. It was always so, always had been so, always would be so, at these meetings of theirs: she was immeasurably the strongest; and the deep-eyed young man fancied, in the chagrin which the perception of this difference always bred in him, that she triumphed in her superior control. Yet it was only in little things that their sexes were thus reversed: Christopher would receive quite a shock if a little dog barked at his heels, and be totally unmoved when in danger of his life.

Certainly the most self-possessed woman in the world, under pressure of the incongruity between their last meeting and the present one, might have shown more embarrassment than Ethelberta showed on greeting him to-day. Christopher was only a man in believing that the shyness which she did evince was chiefly the result of personal interest. She might or might not have been said to blush—perhaps the stealthy change upon her face was too slow an operation to deserve that name: but though pale when he called, the end of ten minutes saw her colour high and wide. She soon set him at his ease, and seemed to relax a long-sustained tension, as she talked to him of her arrangements, hopes, and fears.

“And how do you like London society?” said Ethelberta.

“Pretty well, as far as I have seen it: to the surface of its front door.”

“You will find nothing to be alarmed at if you get inside.”

“Oh, no—of course not—except my own shortcomings,” said the modest musician. “London society is made up of much more refined people than society anywhere else.”

“That’s a very prevalent opinion; and it is nowhere half so prevalent as in London society itself. However, come and see my house—unless you think it a trouble to look over a house?”

“No; I should like it very much.”

The decorations tended towards the artistic gymnastics prevalent in some quarters at the present day. Upon a general flat tint of duck’s-egg green appeared quaint patterns of conventional foliage, and birds, done in bright auburn, several shades nearer to redbreast-red than was Ethelberta’s hair, which was thus thrust further towards brown by such juxtaposition—a possible reason for the choice of tint. Upon the glazed tiles within the chimney-piece were the forms of owls, bats, snakes, frogs, mice, spiders in their webs, moles, and other objects of aversion and darkness, shaped in black and burnt in after the approved fashion.

“My brothers Sol and Dan did most of the actual work,” said Ethelberta, “though I drew the outlines, and designed the tiles round the fire. The flowers, mice, and spiders are done very simply, you know: you only press a real flower, mouse, or spider out flat under a piece of glass, and then copy it, adding a little more emaciation and angularity at pleasure.”

“In that ‘at pleasure’ is where all the art lies,” said he.

“Well, yes—that is the case,” said Ethelberta, thoughtfully; and,

preceding him upstairs, she threw open a door on one of the floors, disclosing Dan in person, engaged upon a similar treatment of this floor also: Sol appeared bulging from the door of a closet, a little further on, where he was fixing some shelves; and both wore workmen's blouses. At once coming down from the short ladder he was standing upon, Dan shook Christopher's hand with some velocity.

"We do a little at a time, you see," he said, "because Colonel down below, and Mrs. Petherwin's visitors, shan't smell the turpentine."

"We be pushing on to-day to get it out of the way," said Sol, also coming forward and greeting their visitor, but more reluctantly than his brother had done. "Now I'll tell ye what—you two," he added, after an uneasy pause, turning from Christopher to Ethelberta and back again in great earnestness: "you'd better not bide here, talking to we rough ones, you know, for folks might find out that there's something closer between us than workmen and employer and employer's friend. So Berta and Mr. Julian, if you'll go on and take no more notice o' us, in case of visitors, I should be obliged—else, perhaps, if we should be found out intimate with ye, and bring down your gentility, you'll blame us for it. I get as nervous as a cat when I think I may be the cause of any disgrace to ye."

"Don't be so silly, Sol," said Ethelberta, laughing.

"Ah, that's all very well," said Sol with an unbelieving smile; "but if we baint company for you out of doors, you baint company for we within—not that I find fault with ye or mind it, and shan't take anything for painting your house, nor will Dan neither, any more for that—no, not a penny; in fact, we are glad to do it for ye. At the same time, you keep to your class, and we'll keep to ours. And so, good afternoon, Berta, when you like to go, and the same to you, Mr. Julian. Dan, is that your mind?"

"I can but own it," said Dan.

The two brothers then turned their backs upon their visitors, and went on working, and Ethelberta and her lover left the room. "My brothers, you perceive," said she, "represent the respectable British workman in his entirety, and a touchy individual he is, I assure you, on points of dignity, after imbibing a few town ideas from his leaders. They are painfully off-hand with me, absolutely refusing to be intimate, from a mistaken notion that I am ashamed of their dress and manners; which, of course, is absurd."

"Which, of course, is absurd!" said Christopher.

"Which, of course, is absurd!" she repeated distinctly, and looking keenly at him. But, finding no harm in his face, she continued as before: "yet, all the time, they will do anything under the sun that they think will advance my interests. In our hearts we are one. All they ask me to do is, to leave them to themselves, and therefore I do so. Now, would you like to see some more of your acquaintance?"

She introduced him to a large attic; where he found himself in the society of two or three persons considerably below the middle height,

whose manners were of that gushing kind sometimes called Continental, their ages ranging from four years to eight. These were the youngest children, presided over by Emmeline, as professor of letters capital and small.

"I am giving them the rudiments of education here," said Ethelberta; "but I foresee several difficulties in the way of keeping them here, which I must get over as best I can. One trouble is, that they don't get enough air and exercise."

"Is Mrs. Chickerel living here as well?" Christopher ventured to enquire, when they were downstairs again.

"Yes; but confined to her room as usual, I regret to say. Two more sisters of mine, whom you have never seen at all, are also here. They are much older than any of the rest of us, and had, broadly speaking, no education at all, poor girls. The eldest, Gwendoline, is my cook, and Cornelia is my housemaid. I suffer much sadness, and almost misery sometimes, in reflecting that here are we, ten brothers and sisters born of one father and mother, who might have mixed together and shared all in the same scenes, and been properly happy, if it were not for the strange accidents that have split us up into sections as you see, cutting me off from them without the compensation of joining me to any others. They are all true as steel in keeping the secret of our kin, certainly; but that brings little joy, though some satisfaction perhaps."

"You might be less despondent, I think. The tale-telling has been one of the successes of the season."

"Yes, I might; but I may observe, that you scarcely set the example of blitheness."

"Ah—that's not because I don't recognise the pleasure of being here. It is from a more general cause: simply an underfeeling I have that at the most propitious moment the distance to the possibility of sorrow is so short that a man's spirits must not rise higher than mere cheerfulness out of bare respect to his insight."

As long as skies are blue, and fields are green,
Evening must usher night, night urge the morrow,
Month follow month with woe, and year wake year to sorrow."

Ethelberta bowed uncertainly; the remark might refer to her past conduct or it might not. "My great cause of uneasiness is the children," she presently said, as a new page of matter. "It is my duty, at all risk and all sacrifice of sentiment, to educate and provide for them. The grown-up ones, older than myself, I cannot help much, but the little ones I can. I keep my two French lodgers for the sake of them."

"The lodgers, of course, don't know the relationship between yourself and the rest of the people in the house?"

"O no!—nor will they ever. My mother is supposed to let the ground and first floors to me—a strange lady—as she does the second and third floors to them. Still, I may be discovered."

"Well—if you are?"

"Let me be. Life is a battle, they say; but it is only so in the sense that a game of chess is a battle—there is no seriousness in it; it may be put an end to at any inconvenient moment by owning yourself beaten, with a careless 'Ha-ha!' and sweeping your pieces into the box. Experimentally, I care to succeed in society; but at the bottom of my heart, I don't care."

"For that very reason you are likely to do it. My idea is, make ambition your business and indifference your relaxation, and you will fail; but make indifference your business and ambition your relaxation, and you will succeed. So impish are the ways of the gods."

"I hope that you at any rate will succeed," she said, at the end of a silence.

"I never can—if success means getting what one wants."

"Why should you not get that?"

"It has been forbidden to me."

Her complexion changed just enough to show that she knew what he meant. "If you were as bold as you are subtle, you would take a more cheerful view of the matter," she said, with a look signifying innermost things.

"I will instantly! Shall I test the truth of my cheerful view by a word of question?"

"I deny that you are capable of taking that view, and until you prove that you are, no question is allowed," she said, laughing, and still warmer in the face and neck. "Nothing but melancholy, gentle melancholy, now as in old times when there was nothing to cause it."

"Ah—you only tease."

"You will not throw aside that bitter medicine of distrust, for the world. You have grown so used to it, that you take it as food, as some invalids do their mixtures."

"Ethelberta, you have my heart—my whole heart. You have had it ever since I first saw you. Now you understand me, and no pretending that you don't, mind, this second time."

"I understood you long ago; you have not understood me."

"You are mysterious," he said lightly; "and perhaps if I disentangle your mystery I shall find it to cover—indifference. I hope it does—for your sake."

"How can you say so!" she exclaimed reproachfully. "Yet I wish it did too—I wish it did cover indifference—for yours. But you have all of me that you care to have, and may keep it for life if you wish to.—Listen, surely there was a knock at the door? Let us go inside the room: I am always uneasy when anybody comes, lest any awkward discovery should be made by a visitor of my miserable contrivances for keeping up the establishment."

Joey met them before they had left the landing.

"Please Berta," he whispered, "Mr. Ladywell has called, and I've showed him into the liberry. You know Berta, this is how it was, you know: I thought you and Mr. Julian were in the drawing-room, and

wouldn't want him to see ye together, and so I asked him to step into the liberry a minute."

" You must improve your way of speaking," she said, with quick embarrassment, whether at the mention of Ladywell's name before Julian, or at the way Joey coupled herself with Christopher, was quite uncertain. " Will you excuse me for a few moments?" she said, turning to Christopher. " Pray sit down; I shall not be long." And she glided down-stairs.

They had been standing just by the drawing-room door, and Christopher turned back into the room with no very satisfactory countenance. It was very odd, he thought, that she should go down to Ladywell in that mysterious manner, when he might have been admitted to where they were talking without any trouble at all. What could Ladywell have to say, as an acquaintance calling upon her for a few minutes, that he was not to hear? Indeed, if it came to that, what right had Ladywell to call upon her at all, even though she were a widow, and to some extent chartered to live in a way which might be considered a trifle free if indulged in by other young women. This was the first time that he himself had ventured into her house on that very account—a doubt whether it was quite proper to call, considering her youth, and the fertility of her position as ground for scandal. But no sooner did he arrive than here was Ladywell blundering in, and since this conjunction had occurred on his first visit, the chances were that Ladywell came very often.

Julian walked up and down the room, every moment expanding itself to a minute in his impatience at the delay and vexation at the cause. After scrutinizing for the fifth time every object on the walls as if endowed with microscopic closeness of sight, his hands under his coat-tails, and his person jiggling up and down upon his toes, he heard her coming up the stairs. When she entered the apartment her appearance was decidedly that of a person subsiding after some little excitement.

" I did not calculate upon being so long," she said sweetly, at the same time throwing back her face and smiling. " But I—was longer than I expected."

" It seemed rather long," said Christopher, gloomily; " but I don't mind it."

" I am glad of that," said Ethelberta.

" As you asked me to stay, I was very pleased to do so, and always should be; but I think that now I will wish you Good-bye."

" You are not vexed with me?" she said, looking quite into his face.

" Mr. Ladywell is nobody, you know."

" Nobody?"

" Well, he is not much, I mean. The case is, that I am sitting to him for a subject in which my face is to be used—otherwise than as a portrait—and he called about it."

" May I say," said Christopher, " that if you want yourself painted, you are ill-advised not to let it be done by a man who knows how to use the brush a little?"

"Oh, he can paint!" said Ethelberta, rather warmly. "His last picture was excellent, I think. It was greatly talked about."

"I imagined you to say that he was a mere nobody!"

"Yes, but—how provoking you are!—nobody, I mean, to talk to. He is a true artist, nevertheless."

Christopher made no reply. The warm understanding between them had quite ended now, and there was no fanning it up again. Sudden tiffs had been the constant misfortune of their courtship in days gone by, had been the remote cause of her marriage to another, and the familiar shadows seemed to be rising again to cloud them with the same persistency as ever. Christopher went down stairs with well-behaved moodiness, and left the house forthwith, the postman coming at the same time to the door.

Ethelberta opened a letter from Picottee—now at Sandbourne again; and stooping to the fire-light, she began to read.

"My dear Ethelberta,—I have tried to like staying at Sandbourne because you wished it, but I can't endure the town at all, dear Berta; everything is so wretched and dull. Oh, I only wish you knew how dismal it is here, and how much I would give to come to London. I cannot help thinking that I could do better in town. You see, I should be close to you, and should have the benefit of your experience. I would not mind what I did for a living could I be there where you all are. It is so like banishment to be here. If I could not get a pupil-teachership in some London school (and I believe I could by advertising) I could stay with you, and be governess to Georgina and Myrtle, for I am sure you cannot spare time enough to teach them as they ought to be taught, and Emmeline is not old enough to have any command over them. I could also assist at your dressmaking, and you must require a great deal of that to be done if you continue to appear in public. Mr. Long read in the papers the account of your first evening, and afterwards I heard two ladies of our committed talking about it; but of course not one of them knew my personal interest in the discussion. Now will you, Ethelberta, think if I may not come? Do, there's a dear sister! I will do anything you set me about if I may only come.

"Your ever affectionate,

"PICOTEE."

"Great powers above—what worries do beset me!" cried Ethelberta, jumping up. "What can possess the child so suddenly—she used to like Sandbourne well enough!" She sat down, and hastily scribbled the following reply :

"My dear Picottee,—There is only a little time to spare before the post goes, but I will try to answer your letter at once. Whatever is the reason of this extraordinary dislike to Sandbourne? It is a nice healthy place, and you are likely to do much better than either of our elder sisters if you

follow straight on in the path you have chosen. Of course, if such good fortune should attend me that I get rich by my contrivances of public story-telling and so on, I shall share everything with you and the rest of us, in which case you shall not work at all. But (although I have been unexpectedly successful so far) this is problematical; and it would be rash to calculate upon all of us being able to live, or even us seven girls only, upon the fortune I am going to make that way. So, though I don't mean to be harsh, I must impress upon you the necessity of going on as you are going just at present. I know the place must be dull, but we must all put up with dulness sometimes. You, being next to me in age, must aid me as well as you can in doing something for the younger ones; and if anybody at all comes and lives here otherwise than as a servant, it must be our father—who will not, however, at present hear of such a thing when I mention it to him. Do think of all this, Picotee, and bear up! Perhaps we shall all be happy and united some day. Joey is waiting to run to the post-office with this at once. All are well. Sol and Dan have nearly finished the repairs and decorations of my house—but I will tell you of that another time,

“Your affectionate sister,
“BERTA.”

CHAPTER XX.

NEAR SANDBOURNE.—LONDON STREETS.—ETHELBERTA'S.

WHEN this letter reached its destination the next morning Picotee, in her over-anxiety, could not bring herself to read it in anybody's presence, and put it in her pocket till she was on her walk across the moor. She still lived at the cottage out of the town, though at some inconvenience to herself, in order to teach at a small village night-school whilst still carrying on her larger occupation of pupil-teacher in Sandbourne.

So she walked and read, and was soon in tears. Moreover, when she thought of what Ethelberta would have replied had that keen sister known the wildness of her true reason in wishing to go, she shuddered with misery. To wish to get near a man only because he had been kind to her, and had admired her pretty face, and had given her flowers, to be attached to him all the more because of its hopeless impracticability, were things to dream of, not to tell. Picotee was quite an unreasoning animal. Her sister arranged situations for her, told her how to conduct herself in them, how to make up anew, in unobtrusive shapes, the valuable wearing apparel she sent from time to time—so as to provoke neither exasperation in the little gentry, nor superciliousness in the big—the goodness of which materials had attracted Faith Julian's quiet eyes. Ethelberta did everything for her, in short; and Picotee obeyed orders with the abstracted ease of mind which people show who have their thinking done for them, and put out

their troubles as they do their washing. She was quite willing not to be clever herself, since it was unnecessary while she had a much-admired sister who was clever enough for two people and to spare.

This arrangement, by which she gained an untroubled existence in exchange for freedom of will, had worked very pleasantly for Picotee until the anomaly of falling in love on her own account created a jar in the machinery. Then she began to know how wearing were miserable days and how much more wearing were miserable nights. She pictured Christopher in London calling upon her dignified sister (for Ethelberta innocently mentioned his name sometimes in writing), and imagined over and over again the mutual signs of warm feeling between them. And now Picotee resolved upon a noble course. Like Juliet, she had been troubled with a consciousness that perhaps her love for Christopher was a trifle forward and unmaidenly, even though she had determined never to let him or anybody in the whole world know of it. To set herself to pray that she might have strength to see him without a pang the lover of her sister, who deserved him so much more than herself, would be a grand penance and corrective.

After uttering petitions to this effect for several days, she still felt very bad; indeed, in the psychological difficulty of striving for what in her soul she did not desire, rather worse, if anything. At last, weary of walking the old road every day and never meeting him, and blank in a general powerlessness, she wrote the letter to Ethelberta, which was only the last one of a series that had previously been written and torn up.

Now this hope had been whirled away like thistledown, and the case was grievous enough to distract a greater stoic than Picotee. The end of it was that she left the school on insufficient notice, gave up her cottage home on the plea—true in the letter—that she was going to join a relative in London, and went off thither by a morning train, leaving her things packed ready to be sent on when she should write for them.

Picotee arrived in town late on a cold February afternoon, bearing a small bag in her hand. She crossed Westminster-bridge on foot just after dusk, and saw a luminous haze hanging over each well-lighted street as it withdrew into distance behind the nearer houses, and showing its direction as a train of morning mist shows the course of a distant stream when the stream itself is hidden. The lights along the river-side towards Charing Cross sent an inverted palisade of gleaming swords down into the shaking water, and the pavement ticked to the touch of pedestrians' feet, all of whom tripped along as if walking only to practise a favourite quick step, and held handkerchiefs to their mouths to strain off the river mist from their lungs. She enquired her way to Connaught Crescent, and between five and six o'clock reached her sister's door.

Two or three minutes were passed in accumulating resolution sufficient to ring the bell, which when at last she did, was not performed in a way at all calculated to make the young man Joey hasten to the door. After the lapse of a certain time he did, however, find leisure to stroll and see

what the caller might want, out of curiosity to know who there could be in London afraid to ring a bell twice.

Joey's delight exceeded even his surprise, the ruling maxim of his life being the more the merrier under all circumstances. The beaming young man was about to run off and announce her upstairs and down stairs, left and right, when Picotee called him hastily to her. In the hall her quick young eye had caught sight of an umbrella with a peculiar horn handle—an umbrella she had been accustomed to meet on Sandbourne moor on many happy afternoons. Christopher was evidently in the house.

"Joey," she said as if she were ready to faint, "don't tell Berta I am come. She has company, has she not?"

"O no—only Mr. Julian!" said the brother. "He's quite one of the family."

"Never mind—can't I go down into the kitchen with you?" she enquired. There had been bliss and misery mingled in those tidings, and she scarcely knew for a moment which way they affected her. What she did know was that she had run her dear fox to earth, and a sense of satisfaction at that feat prevented her just now from counting the cost of the performance.

"Does Mr. Julian come to see her very often?" said she.

"Oh yes—he's always a-coming—a regular bore to me."

"A regular what?"

"Bore!—Ah, I forgot, you don't know our town words. However, come along."

They passed by the doors on tiptoe, and their mother upstairs being, according to Joey's account, in the midst of a nap, Picotee was unwilling to disturb her: so they went down at once to the kitchen, when forward rushed Gwendoline the cook, flourished her floury hands, and Cornelia the housemaid, dancing over her brush; and these having welcomed and made Picotee comfortable, who should ring the area-bell and be admitted down the steps but Sol and Dan. The workman-brothers, their day's duties being over, had called to see their relations, first, as usual, going home to their lodgings in Marylebone and making themselves as spruce as bridegrooms of a minor kind, according to the rules of their newly-acquired town experience. For the London mechanic is only nine hours a mechanic, though the country mechanic works, eats, drinks, and sleeps a mechanic throughout the whole twenty-four.

"God bless my soul—Picotee! said Dan, standing fixed. Well—I say, this is splendid: ha-ha!"

"Picotee—what brought you here?" said Sol, expanding the circumference of his face in satisfaction. "Well, come along—never mind so long as you be here."

Picotee explained circumstances as well as she could without stating them, and after a general conversation of a few minutes, Sol interrupted with—"Anybody upstairs with Mrs. Petherwin?"

"Mr. Julian was there just now," said Joey; "but he may be gone.

Berta always lets him slip out how he can, the form of ringing me up not being necessary with him. Wait a minute—I'll see."

Joseph vanished up the stairs; and the question whether Christopher was gone or not being an uninteresting one to the majority, the talking went on upon other matters. When Joey crept down again a minute later, Picottee was sitting aloof and silent, and he accordingly singled her out to speak to.

"Such a lark, Picottee!" he whispered. "Berta's a-courting of her young man. Would you like to see how they carries on a bit?"

"Dearly I should!" said Picottee, the pupils of her eyes dilating.

Joey conducted her to the top of the basement stairs, and told her to listen. Within a few yards of them was the morning-room door, now standing ajar; and an intermittent flirtation in soft male and female tones could be heard going on inside. Picottee's lips parted at thus learning the condition of things, and she leant against the stair-newel.

"My! What's the matter?" said Joey.

"I don't know. If this is London, I don't like it at all!" moaned Picottee.

"Well—I never see such a girl—fainting all over the stairs for nothing in the world."

"Oh—it will soon be gone—it is—it is only indigestion."

"Indigestion? Much you simple country-people can know about that! You should see what devils of indigestions we get in high life—eating 'normous great dinners and suppers that require clever physicians to attend to 'em, or else they'd kill us off with gout next day; and waking in the morning with such a splitting headache, and dry throat, and inward cusses about human nature, till you feel all the world like some great lord. However, now let's go down again."

"No, no, no!" said the unhappy maiden, imploringly. "Hark!"

They listened again. The voices of the musician and poetess had changed: there was a decided frigidity in their tone—then came a louder expression—then a silence.

"You needn't be afear'd," said Joey. "They won't fight; bless you, they busts out quarrelling like this times and times when they've been over-friendly, but it soon gets straight with 'em again."

There was now a quick walk across the room, and Joey and his sister drew down their heads out of sight. Then the room door was slammed, quick footsteps went along the hall, the front door closed just as loudly, and Christopher's tread passed into nothing along the pavement.

"That's rather a wuss one than they mostly have; but Lord, 'tis nothing at all."

"I don't much like biding here," said Picottee.

"Oh, 'tis how we do all over the West End," said Joey. "'Tis yer ignorance of town life that makes it seem a good deal to ye."

"You can't make much boast about town life; for you haven't left off talking just as they do down in Wessex."

" Well, I own to that—what's fair is fair, and 'tis a true charge ; but if I talk the Wessex way 'tis n't for want of knowing better ; 'tis because my staunch nater makes me bide faithful to our old ancient institutions. You'd soon own 'twas n't ignorance in me, if you knowed what large quantities of noblemen I gets mixed up with every day. In fact 'tis thoughted here and there that I shall do very well in the world."

" Well, let us go down," said Picotee. " Everything seems so overpowering here."

" Oh, you'll get broke in soon enough. I felt just the same when I first entered into high life."

" Do you think Berta will be angry with me ? How does she treat you ? "

" Well, I can't complain. You see she's my own flesh and blood, and what can I say ? But, in secret truth, the wages is terrible low, and barely pays for the tobacco I consooms."

" Oh, Joey, you wicked boy. If mother only knew that you smoked ! "

" I don't mind the wickedness so much as the smell. And Mrs. Petherwin has got such a nose for a fellow's clothes. 'Tis one of the greatest knots in service—the smoke question. 'Tis thoughted that we shall make a great stir about it in the mansions of the nobility soon."

" How much more you know of life than I do—you only fourteen and me seventeen ! "

" Yes, that's true. You see, age is nothing—'tis opportunity. And even I can't boast, for many a younger man knows more."

" But don't smoke, Joey—there's a dear ! "

" What can I do ? Society hev its rules, and if a person wishes to keep his position, he must do as the world do. We are Fashion's slave—as much a slave as the meanest in the land."

They got downstairs again, and when the dinner of the French lady and gentleman had been sent up and cleared away, and also Ethelberta's evening tea (which she formed into a genuine meal, making a dinner of luncheon when nobody was there, to give less trouble to her servant-sisters), they all sat round the fire. Then the rustle of a dress was heard on the staircase, and squirrel-haired Ethelberta appeared in person. It was her custom thus to come down every spare evening, to teach Joey and her sisters something or other—mostly French, which she spoke fluently ; but the cook and housemaid showed more ambition than intelligence in acquiring that tongue, though Joey learnt it readily enough.

There was consternation in the camp for a moment or two, on account of poor Picotee, Ethelberta being not without firmness in matters of discipline. Her eye instantly lighted upon her disobedient sister, now looking twice as disobedient as she really was.

" Oh, you are here, Picotee ? I am glad to see you," said the mistress of the house, quietly.

This was altogether to Picotee's surprise, for she had expected a round rating at least, in her freshness hardly being aware that this reserve of

feeling was an acquired habit of Ethelberta's, and that civility stood in town for as much vexation as a tantrum represented in Wessex.

Picotee lamely explained her outward reasons for coming, and soon began to find that Ethelberta's opinions on the matter would not be known by the tones of her voice. But innocent Picotee was as wily as a religionist in sly elusions of the letter whilst infringing the spirit of a dictum ; and by talking very softly and earnestly about the wondrous good she could do by remaining in the house as governess to the children, and playing the part of lady's-maid to her sister at show times, she so far coaxed Ethelberta out of her intentions that she almost accepted the plan as a good one. It was agreed that for the present at any rate, Picotee should remain. Then a visit was made to Mrs. Chickarel's room, where the remainder of the evening was passed ; and harmony reigned in the household.

CHAPTER XXI.

ETHELBERTA'S DRAWING-ROOM.

PICOTEE'S heart was fitfully glad. She was near the man who had enlarged her capacity from girl's to woman's, a little note or two of young feeling to a whole diapason ; and though nearness was perhaps not in itself a great reason for felicity when viewed beside the complete realisation of all that a woman can desire in such circumstances, it was much in comparison with the outer darkness of the previous time.

It became evident to all the family that some misunderstanding had arisen between Ethelberta and Mr. Julian. What Picotee hoped in the centre of her heart as to the issue of the affair it would be too complex a thing to say. If Christopher became cold towards her sister he would not come to the house ; if he continued to come it would really be as Ethelberta's lover — altogether, a pretty game of perpetual check for Picotee.

He did not make his appearance for several days. Picotee being a presentable girl, and decidedly finer-natured than her sisters below stairs, she sat occasionally with Ethelberta in the afternoon when the teaching of the little ones had been done for the day ; and thus she had an opportunity of observing Ethelberta's emotional condition with reference to Christopher, which Picotee did with an interest that the elder sister was very far from suspecting.

At first Ethelberta seemed blithe enough without him. One more day went, and he did not come, and then her manner was that of apathy. Another day passed, and from fanciful elevations of the eyebrow, and long breathings, it became apparent that Ethelberta had decidedly passed the indifferent stage, and was getting seriously out of sorts about him. Next morning she looked all hope. He did not come that day either, and Ethelberta began to look pale with fear.

"Why don't you go out?" said Picotee, timidly.

"I can hardly tell: I have been expecting some one."

"When she comes, I must run up to mother at once, must I not?" said clever Picotee.

"It is not a lady," said Ethelberta, blandly. She came then and stood by Picotee, and looked musingly out of the window. "I may as well tell you, perhaps," she continued. "It is a Mr. Julian. He is—I suppose—my lover, in plain English."

"Ah!" said Picotee.

"Whom I am not going to marry until he gets rich."

"Ah—how strange! If I had him—such a lover, I mean—I would marry him if he continued poor."

"I don't doubt it, Picotee; just as you come to London without caring about consequences, or would do any other crazy thing and not mind in the least what came of it. But somebody in the family must take a practical view of affairs, or we should all go to the dogs."

Picotee recovered from the snubbing which she felt that she deserved, and charged gallantly by saying, with delicate showings of indifference, "Do you love this Mr. What's-his-name of yours?"

"Mr. Julian. Oh, he's a very gentlemanly man. That is, except when he is rude, and ill-uses me, and will not come and apologise!"

"If I had him—a lover, I would ask him to come if I wanted him to."

Ethelberta did not give her mind to this remark; but drawing a long breath said with a pouting laugh, which presaged unreality, "The idea of his getting indifferent now! I have been intending to keep him on until I got tired of his attentions, and then put an end to them by marrying him; but here is he, before he has hardly declared himself, forgetting my existence as much as if he had vowed to love and cherish me for life. 'Tis an unnatural inversion of the manners of good society."

"When did you first get to care for him, dear Berta?"

"Oh—when I had seen him once or twice."

"Goodness—how quick you were!"

"Yes—if I am in the mind for loving I am not to be hindered by shortness of acquaintanceship."

"Nor I neither!" sighed Picotee.

"Nor any other woman. We don't need to know a man well in order to love him. That's only necessary when we want to leave off."

"Oh Berta—you don't believe that!"

"If a woman did not invariably form an opinion of her choice before she has half seen him, and love him before she has half formed an opinion, there would be no tears and pining in the whole feminine world, and poets would starve for want of a topic. I don't believe it, do you say? Ah, well, we shall see."

Picotee did not know what to say to this; and Ethelberta left the room to see about her duties as public story-teller, in which capacity she had undertaken to appear again this very evening.

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